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WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Mid edition No 655

EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

HEALTH

The average age is rising

How will county deal with older population?

HISTORY

A few words with The Few

Recalling the bravery of fighter pilot heroes

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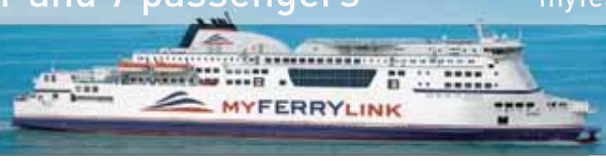

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People living longer? That's a good thing

By the year 2035, nearly a quarter of Kent's population will be 65 or over.

You can almost already hear the alarmist shouts of outrage: The cost of pensions... the strain on the NHS... the intolerable burden of providing care home places... the queues in the supermarket.

It is as if we have forgotten that our old people are human beings - human beings who have an enormous amount to contribute to our society.

Older people have lived, loved, and learned a great deal. They have spent their lives working for, and contributing to, this country. And yet whenever we talk about our ageing population, it is with negativity.

How inconvenient that people should dare to remain alive for longer, enjoying a well-earned retirement after 40 years of hard work.

We never speak of the wisdom, skills, knowledge, values and community spirit that older people can bring to our often self-centred, fractured society, nor of our duty to care for those who have spent their lives giving to the rest of us.

No-one, these days, would talk about a disabled child being a burden, or suggest that providing care to ensure their quality of life was the best it could possibly be was anything other than money excellently spent. And that is quite right. But begrudging these things at the other end of the scale ought to be equally unthinkable.

Whether it's setting aside more public money to provide medical care – and, austerity or no austerity, there are ways of finding or raising the money – or giving up small amounts of our time to help stop elderly people in our communities becoming isolated, we should see it as an honour, not a burden, to take care of our older people.

As a wise man once said – one of the measures of society is how it looks after its most vulnerable...

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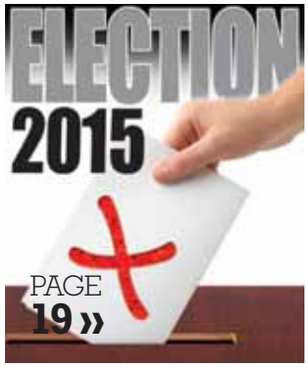

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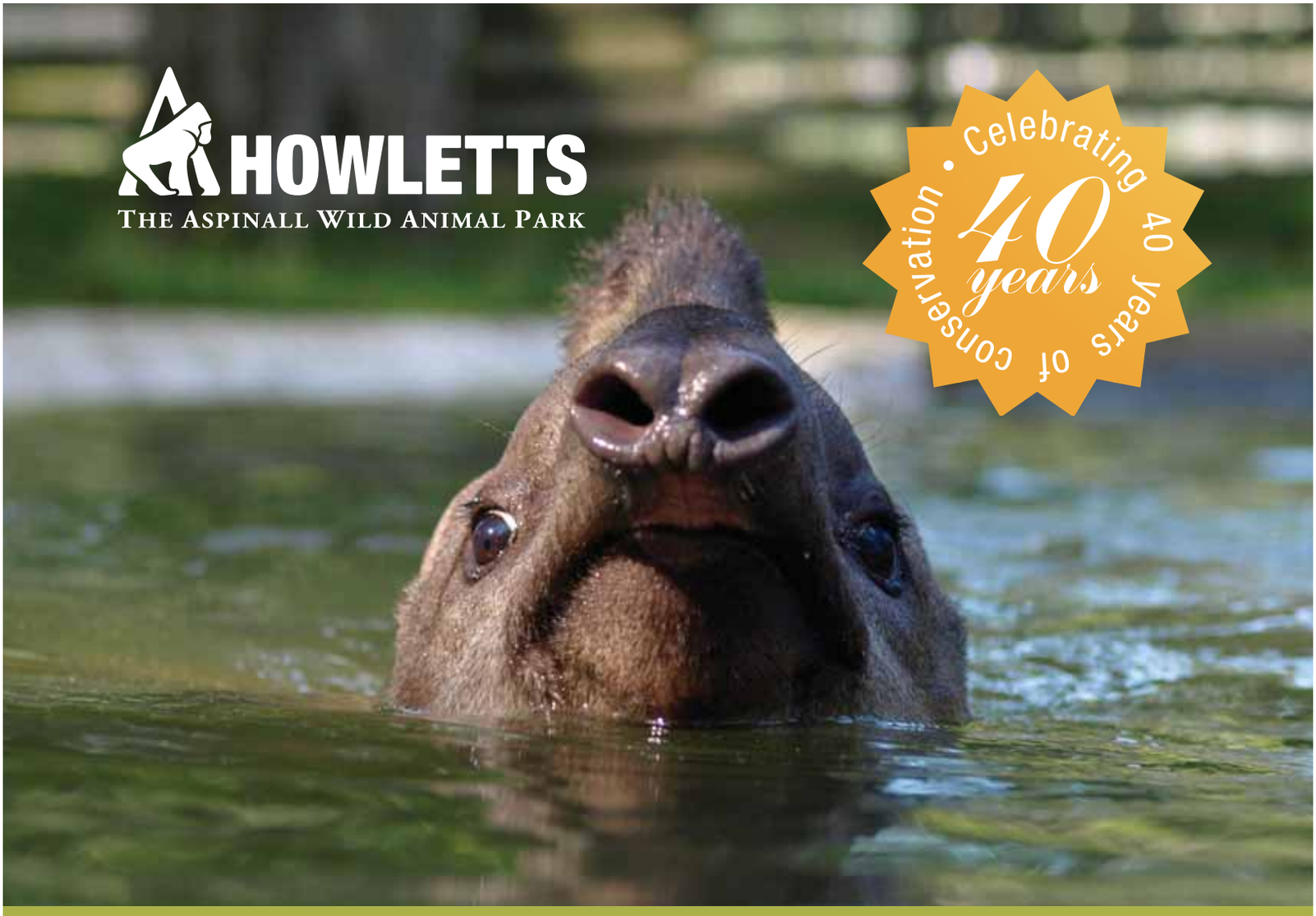

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Airport minister pledges his support for Manston

Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

PLAN: John Hayes says it is possible to save Manston with Craig Mackinlay and Roger Gale's five point plan

THE minister for aviation, John Hayes, has delivered a double boost to the campaign to save Manston Airport.

The minister announced a new deal for Bristow search and rescue helicopters which could be based at Manston. The company had originally intended to base itself at Manston before its closure, but the announcement by Mr Hayes revealed that the one-year deal Bristow has signed only commits the company to basing itself at Lydd Airport temporarily.

North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale said that the announcement was great news for the former airport.

Sir Roger said: "The fact that Bristow, a strong commercial organisation, are prepared to demonstrate their faith in Manston and their willingness to give us time to get the airport operational again speaks volumes. Search and Rescue will be coming home to the airfield where it belongs and this should send out a clear message, if nothing else does, that the Government means business and that there is no 'plan B'."

The minister also used his visit to tell Thanet District Council (TDC) he is satisfied by the indemnity guarantee from RiverOak, the company which wants to partner with the council to force the sale of Manston in order to retain it as an airport.

One of the main obstacles to TDC serving a Compulsory Purchase Order - which would force the airport's current owners to sell it - was the lack of confidence in the financial guarantees being offered by RiverOak.

As a direct result of that, the Government commissioned PWC to review all of the documents used by the council to make its decision.

The minister said that following the independent analysis he "is satisfied by the indemnity offered by RiverOak to protect the council against the costs of the Compulsory Purchase Order."

Mr Hayes said: "I have been paying close attention to the future of Manston Airport throughout my time in the Department for Transport.

"I believe the announcements I have made today are huge steps towards securing Manston's future as a working airport. It is further evidence that it really is possible for Craig Mackinlay and Sir Roger Gale to deliver their five-point plan for Manston."

Executive principal of two Kent academies is suspended from duties

THE executive principal of two Kent academies has been suspended and a police investigation into an abuse of a position of trust launched.

Sean Heslop, executive principal of the Folkestone Academy and Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate, was "suspended from his duties" earlier this week.

Parents were informed of the news in a letter from the Academy trust chairman Roger De Haan, which told them that an investigation of a "confidential" nature was under way.

A police probe is currently taking place, investigating an allegation of an abuse of a position of trust.

This is amid claims of a relationship between Mr Heslop and a former pupil, who is allegedly pregnant with his child.

A Kent Police spokesman said; "On March 31 police arrested a 47-year-old man on suspicion of abuse of a position of trust.

"He was later released on bail until July 30 pending further investigation."

School officials were keen to reassure parents of the students at the school that teaching and school routines would carry on as normal.

A statement from trustees explained: "Relevant authorities have been informed and an investigation is in progress.

"As you will appreciate, we are not able to comment further on this matter.

"His suspension has not interfered with the good work going on in the schools, where the head teachers and their leadership teams ensure that teaching and other school activities continue as normal and that school routine is unaffected."

Mr Heslop was appointed as the principal of Folkestone Academy in 2009 and he became the executive principal of both schools in 2013.

He was previously the head of Tiffin School, a boys grammar school located in Kingston-upon-Thames in south west London.

Ebbsfleet United get green light to redevelop stadium

EBBSFLEET United have been given the nod to begin an ambitious multi-million pound redevelopment of their Stonebridge Road Stadium by Gravesham Borough Council.

The council agreed to give the football club planning permission for the new stadium, which will see improved facilities for fans.

The plans for the large scale project were submitted to the council at the end of January.

They were considered at a meeting of the regulatory board of the council on Wednesday evening (April 8).

The proposals were approved unanimously by the 10 councillors.

■ Turn to the sports page for the full story and pictures of the new stadium.

Smog clouds descend over county as high pollution hits

HIGH levels of air-pollution hit the south east on Friday, with Green MEP Keith Taylor warning it could cause serious health problems.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' website flagged up the very high pollution levels 'in the far south east of England', saying it was caused by a flow from the south.

Mr Taylor, the MEP for south east England said: ''Air pollution is a deadly serious problem as it causes serious heart and lung problems and is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths every year in the UK.

''Whoever forms the next Government, one of the first things they must do is urgently address this health crisis that currently only seems to be getting worse.''

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More time to question men on terror offences

POLICE have been given more time to question three men who were arrested in Dover on suspicion of Syria-related terror offences.

The men, who are all in their 20s and from Birmingham, were arrested at the port on April 3 and have been in detention since then.

West Midlands Police have been granted an extension on how long the men can be held.

Officers now have until Friday (April 17) to either charge or release the suspects.

Three others were also arrested at the same time. A woman has been released without charge and two men have been handed over to immigration officials for further investigation.

Weald could be sat on billions of barrels of oil says exploration firm

Jamie Weir
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OIL reserves totalling up to 100 billion barrels could be sitting underneath the south of England, with some in the Weald of Kent according to exploration company UK Oil and Gas (UKOG).

The massive deposit was revealed by CEO of the company, Stephen Sanderson, who described the find as 'world class', stating that it had the potential for 'significant daily oil production'.

However celebrations are likely to be limited, as just three per cent of the total resource may be accessible for the company to extract.

The announcement by the company came after drilling at UKOG's Horse Hill-1 well, which is near Gatwick Airport.

The company's analysis revealed the area near the well could hold as much as 158 million barrels of oil per square mile.

According to UKOG, the oil lies at a depth of between 2,500ft and 3,000ft. The company has repeatedly stated that it would not use the controversial fracking method – where water and chemicals are pumped into the rock at high pressure – to extract the gas.

OIL: Millions of barrels found

Despite this, the announcement has been criticised by campaigners against the use of fracking. Environmental group, Greenpeace, has said that cash should be invested in green technologies instead of extracting fossil fuels.

The group's UK chief scientist, Dr Doug Parr, said: "To gleefully rub your hands at a new fossil fuel discovery you need to turn the clock back to the 19th century and ignore everything we have learnt about climate change since. We already have more than enough coal, oil, and gas reserves to fry the planet.

"Dotting the English countryside with drilling rigs and pipelines to squeeze the last drop of oil out of Britain doesn't make any sense.

"It's time we uncoupled our economy from the dangerous rollercoaster of fossil fuels and invested in the clean technologies that can provide safe and cheap energy for decades to come."

AL MURRAY: He handed in papers

[illegible] in town with 'beer' engine

PUB LANDLORD Al Murray made quite an entrance when he arrived in Thanet to hand in his nomination paperwork.

He arrived in a beer-filled fire engine on Wednesday (April 8) and visited Thanet District Council's offices, where he handed in his papers.

He has thrown his hat into the ring for the South Thanet seat in the general election with his Freedom of the United Kingdom Party (FUKP).

During the visit to Thanet the beer-loving TV comedian poured pints from the fire engine.

The 46-year-old will be standing against Ukip leader Nigel Farage in the upcoming election.

The Thanet seat has become one of the most high profile in the country after Mr Farage announced that he would be standing.

One of FUKP's manifesto pledges is to brick up the Channel Tunnel, and others include lowering the cost of beer to just 1p and making Thanet the capital of the UK.

Mr Murray has previously said: "It seems to me that the UK is ready for a bloke waving a pint around, offering common sense solutions."

"It seemed to me that if I was to make my stand for Common Sense, where better than South Thanet?"

Election poll results show indecisiveness

THE results from our online General Election poll have shown that a large proportion of Kent votes are still up for grabs this year.

Almost one in six of the people who took part in our questionnaire said that their vote could still be swayed and four per cent of people said that their vote is 'definitely up for grabs'.

Meanwhile, 36 per cent of respondents say that they are expecting to vote differently than they did in 2010.

We asked visitors to our website a handful of key questions about the election, their vote and the issues that matter to them and, of the people who responded, 73pc were male and 27pc were female.

For the full story and results, with political analysis, turn to pages eight and nine.

■ To read more of our General Election coverage, you can visit the new section of our website, which can be found at www.kentnews.co.uk/home/election-2015.

Ashford eyesore set for redevelopment

ASHFORD council has given Ashford College the green light to redevelop a town centre grot spot.

The college - previously known as K College and now part of the Hadlow Group - applied for planning permission to build a new campus on its Elwick Road site earlier in the year. The council has now approved the planning application for the first phase of the redevelopment.

Building will now start later this year in July, with the college saying that it will be ready to open by the start of 2017 academic year.

The development has received significant backing from key stakeholders, with The Schools Funding Agency, Local Enterprise Partnership and Ashford Borough Council all adding their support.

Mark Dance, Kent County Council cabinet member and a member of the Central Ashford Community Forum, confirmed that he was in favour of the application, congratulating The Hadlow Group and Ashford Borough Council for progressing the application.

'Filthy' takeaway was overrun with mice

A TAKEAWAY boss has been hit with a £14,500 fine after his shop was overrun with mice and mouldy tomato puree was used for pizza toppings.

Kunaratnam Kunanathan, 36, admitted seven charges relating to food offences at his business, Pizza Plus Fried Chicken, in High Street, Gillingham, at Medway Magistrates' Court on Tuesday.

Environmental health inspectors from Medway Council found a widespread mouse infestation, pizza boxes and other food packaging contaminated by mouse droppings and filthy food preparation areas. Mouldy tomato puree was being used for pizza toppings.

The premises were closed immediately in January by the council. They later reopened but have since been closed for good by the owner.

Kunanathan, from Catford, London, admitted seven charges under food safety and hygiene regulations, including selling unfit food, and two health and safety charges. As well as the fine, he was ordered to pay £2,793 in costs.

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agenda

What will make next week's headlines…

Learn to love leeches at medieval health day

HISTORICAL entertainer Russell Palmer will be talking leeches, bile and bone saws at a medieval health day at Milton Chantry in Gravesend today (Sunday).

Children and adults can learn all about medieval medicine and healthcare - such as it was - from noon until 5pm.

"I'll be teaching the kids how to test urine, and there'll be some leechcraft and some removing of limbs," Mr Palmer said.

"I'll have some of my surgery tools with me, including a knife and a bone saw - all dirty and black of course."

(Note to parents: there will be no actual surgery, actual urine, actual leeches or actual removing of limbs.)

"It's going to be very light-hearted and funny," Mr Palmer added.

County's minerals and waste plan inspected

THE public examination of Kent County Council's new minerals and waste plan will be examined on Monday (April 14).

The plan sets out KCC's strategy for future mineral resources, and also waste management facilities in the county.

It could prove controversial as it also designates areas the council deems appropriate for mineral extraction.

The examination, which takes place at the Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel, is due to last up to seven days.

An independent planning inspector then decides whether to allow the plan.

...also

A249 crossing closed

THE A249 Sheppey Crossing will be closed over four weekends for what the Highways Agency calls 'essential resurfacing works'.

Closures begin on April 24 and are due to end on May 31.

Hope for Manston CPO

THE saga of Manston Airport is set to continue as RiverOak, which wants to buy the former airport, looks likely to make a second attempt to convince Thanet District Council to proceed with a compulsory purchase order on the site.

Legal high ban in place

THE fight against so-called 'legal highs' continues as the government's ban on five of the substances kicks in.

The temporary ban came into force on Friday (April 10), and will remain in place for 12 months.

County cricket starts

THE County Championships get underway this week, with Kent County Cricket Club facing Essex on Sunday (April 19).

The team will be hoping to better last year's performance, and make it into Division One this season.

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Torn between a leader and the policies

An online Kent on Sunday election 2015 poll shows one in six Kent votes are still up for grabs...

A LARGE proportion of Kent's votes in May's General Election are still up for grabs, a survey (results opposite) by this newspaper suggests.

With less than a month to go until the nation goes to the polls, almost one in six of those who took part in our online election questionnaire say their vote can still be swayed.

Meanwhile, 36 per cent say they expect to vote differently from 2010.

We asked visitors to our website a handful of key questions about the election, their vote and issues that matter to them – with our respondents split 73 per cent male and 27 per cent female.

While 57 per cent said they were absolutely certain who they'd vote for, 10 per cent said they 'had an idea but my vote is still up for grabs' and four per cent said that their vote was 'definitely up for grabs'.

John Fitzgibbon, senior lecturer in politics at Canterbury Christ Church University, said: "I think people are unsure because, if you look at people across the country, they are really concentrating on one crucial aspect - people see David Cameron as prime minister much more than they do Ed Miliband, but they favour Labour's policies, so they are torn.

"Some think the Labour party will do better on the issues that matter most to them."

He added: "Each politician is going to make a very different case. People are very, very divided on what they are focusing on."

And this indecisiveness is likely to continue.

"It will come down to questions like: do they trust local politicians, do they like Ed Miliband, do they not like David Cameron?" said Dr Fitzgibbon.

"I think it will stay that way up to the last minute. Only then will people decide what way they are going to vote. Unless something crazy happens, or somebody makes a huge bungle in a debate."

With some of Kent's seats expected to be on a knife-edge, those 14 per cent of unsure voters could be crucial on May 7 in determining which parties win.

Only 27 per cent said they believed the government had had a positive impact on their life since 2010, while 45 per cent said it had had a negative impact.

The figures suggest prospective MPs need to do more out on the streets of the county, with just 15 per cent saying they had received a visit from a candidate, and 79 per cent that they hadn't. Reassuringly, 83 per cent did at least say they knew who their MP was.

So should MPs be on the doorstep more often?

"I think it's absolutely something that people should be doing but it depends on the constituency," said Dr Fitzgibbon.

"In places where there is a three-way tie, it absolutely makes a difference. Someone like Julian Brazier, MP for Canterbury, is likely to win and he probably doesn't need to do anything. But it does make a huge difference in quite marginal seats if you actually meet your politicians face to face."

He said that Ukip were focusing on "getting people on the ground", but that this might not be the case for the Conservatives.

"They are really pushing David Cameron rather than local constituencies per se," he added.

When people were asked what issue mattered to them most, economy came out on top (27 per cent) followed by health (17 per cent) and immigration (16 per cent).

"You talk to different people and they will say there are different issues," said Dr Fitzgibbon.

"That's quite difficult for politicians - what are you going to focus on?"

ANALYSIS

Annabelle Dickson
Political Editor
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OUR survey is proof that in the most uncertain of elections, many people are just that - still uncertain.

The big question is whether support for the minor parties will wane as polling day gets nearer.

Will people respond to threats that if you vote Ukip you get Ed Miliband, you vote SNP you get David Cameron, you vote Green and you get Conservative? The minor parties' vote may well be diluted by the number of imponderables.

Neither Ed Miliband nor David Cameron appear to have captured the imagination of the voters.

The polls put them neck and neck. So who can stumble over the line and into Downing Street could well come down to the 14 per cent who have not yet made up their minds, particularly in the marginal seats.

The ground war is key. Labour says it is on track to have four million "conversations", with teams of activists out on the streets. They have a much bigger regional operation than at the last election.

The Conservatives are also diligently trying to win every vote, with activists and resources piling in from across the country to join the close battles.

The Lib Dems have long been known for their incredible organisational abilities on the ground - something the Greens and the UK Independence Party are hoping to emulate.

But despite this strategy, it is clear from our survey that the party activists have still not had as many face-to-face conversations as they would like, with merely one in seven people confirming that a campaigner has come calling.

And of course, there is only so much you can do on the doorstep if you don't have the policies. Labour will be heartened by news that the health service comes out as one of the top issues for voters, given that it has put it at the centre of its campaign.

But the thorny issue of immigration continues to be an important election issue, and this is only really good news for the UK Independence Party.

Hoping to thwart the leaking of votes to the anti-European Union party, most of the other parties have come up with curbs, to varying degrees.

With less than a month to go, the parties will need to get out on the doorsteps to first find, and then sell to, the undecided electorate.

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The results:

affordable European tax NHS austerity poor cuts teachers immigration benefits

Some of your responses when asked:
If you could ask the incoming government to pledge one change, law or policy, what would it be?

To give the NHS the funding it needs

Cut immigration

Leave the EU

Help the poor

More pay and respect for nurses and teachers

National ownership of essential utilities and transport

Scrap the bedroom tax

Keep us in Europe

Tell the truth, we are not stupid

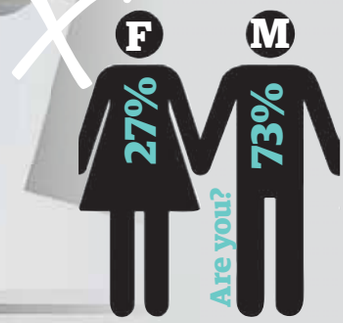
Get rid of academies and free schools

Age?
18-30 10%
31-40 17%
41-50 16%
51-60 19%
Over 60 37%

The government has had a negative impact on my life since 2010 **45%**

The government has had no impact on my life since 2010 **25%**

The government has had a positive impact on my life since 2010 **27%**



Do you know who your MP is?
Yes 83%
No 10%
Not sure 6%

Which of the following statements is true?

I'm registered to vote and will do so.. 98%
I'm registered to vote but won't do so ..0%
I can vote but chose not to register 1%
I'm not registered to vote but plan to 1%

Which of these issues is most important to you in the upcoming election?

Economy 27%
Health 17%
Immigration 16%
The European Union 11%
Housing 6%
Unemployment..... 4%
Pensions..... 4%
Crime and law and order.....3%
Education.....3%
Tax 2%
Older people's care.....2%
Benefits 1%
Foreign policy 1%
Defence 1%
Childcare.....1%
Other.....1%

Do you expect to vote differently from 2010?
Yes 36%
No 51%
Don't know 12%

If you intend to vote have you decided which party you will vote for?

Yes - I'm 100 per cent certain 57%
Yes - I'm pretty much certain 28%
I've an idea but my vote is still up for grabs.... 10%
No - my vote is definitely up for grabs 4%

Has a candidate knocked on your door asking for your vote yet?
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The average age is rising and we are living longer

Nearly a quarter of Kent's population will be 65 or over by 2035. **David Powles** and **Sarah Linney** ask what this means for the county...

BURDEN OR BENEFIT?: An older population will bring experience and knowledge but at what cost?

ALMOST one-in-four people in Kent will be aged 65 or over within two decades.

Recently released government statistics show the average age will rise in every district in the county, putting increased strain on the state to support the growing number of elderly people.

The starkest rise will be in Dover, where at the moment 22 per cent of the district is 65 or over, but this is projected to rise to 33 per cent by 2037.

For Shepway and Thanet, the figures will rise from 23 per cent to 32 per cent and 22 per cent to 28 per cent respectively.

Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are all also set to see their over-65 populations rise to more than 25 per cent for the first time.

Only Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, Swale and Tonbridge and Malling are projected to have fewer than one in four people of pensionable age and above.

Over-65s cost the state more than any other age group and the rise is likely to put increased pressure on councils, care homes and hospitals in particular.

Some seven per cent of the population in Dover and Shepway is expected to be 85 or over by 2037 - compared with three per cent at the moment. The national average is set to rise to four per cent, with Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells hitting six percent.

Dover and Shepway are the oldest places in the county, with an average age of 45 right now, which will rise to 50 and 49 respectively. In 1992, Dover's average age was 38.

The Office for National Statistics report highlights an age divide in some parts of the county, with the average age in Dartford and Medway 37 at the moment, and set to rise to just 40 by 2037.

However, Penny Nicholls, CEO of Age Concern Malling, said that this ought to be seen as a positive thing.

"Healthcare is excellent, so people are surviving diseases and living longer, and people of retirement age are more active," she said.

"We really need to get behind this. The older population have a huge amount to offer our community.

"It's the first time we have had such an explosion in the older population and I don't think we have really grasped the implications.

"It's important to engage with the older population and make life better for them. We need to see them not as a burden but as an asset. It's not about what people can't do, it's about what they can do."

She said efforts needed to be made on all sorts of fronts to make sure older people could get access to the things they needed or wanted, from historic buildings which had no disabled access to healthcare.

"We have to make sure we have sufficient resources to help people stay in their own homes. That will reduce the impact on hospitals and GPs and the number of people having to go into residential care," Mrs Nicholls said.

"We are also seeing a lot of elderly people who are lonely and isolated.

Isolation can drive people to their GP surgery just for someone to talk to.

"We have had a crumbling infrastructure in terms of the NHS and pension provision for decades, but we have always known this was coming. We need to increase contributions for the NHS, through higher national insurance or tax, and use the money we have better.

"This is about redistribution of wealth and social mobility. The NHS and the way we look after our old people are one of the great miracles of the UK, and we lose them at our peril."

The report also highlights a likely age imbalance in some parts of the county, with the proportion of children aged 15 or under expected to fall to 15 per cent or below in Canterbury, Dover and Shepway by 2037.

In 1992, 18 per cent of Canterbury's population was 15 or under, compared with 16 per cent now and an estimated 14 per cent within two decades.

Ashford, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells all have 20 per cent of their population aged 15 or less at the moment, but are expected to see a fall by one or two per cent in the next two decades.

■ **To explore the figures for yourself, visit our website.**

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

IT is estimated that there are ten million people aged 65 and over across the country, but this is expected to grow by five-and-a-half million in the next two decades.

There are two main reasons for this. We're living longer then before – and people born in the baby boom just after the Second World War will reach their late 80s by 2035.

At the moment, two per cent of people are over 85, but by 2037 this is forecast to double to five per cent. The proportion of under-16s will fall from 19 per cent to 17 per cent.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: What cost an older population?

KENT ON SUNDAY SAYS...

WE'RE going to live longer than ever before - and that's largely testament to the many advances in health treatments over the years.

We'll get to enjoy more of life's experiences, see more of the world and spend more time seeing the children, grand-children or even great grand-children grow up.

But the change won't come without its pressures and problems.

The elderly population is already the most expensive age group in terms of cost to society. Currently an estimated 65 per cent of the Department of Work and Pensions' budget goes on retirees.

Meanwhile the average cost to the NHS of a retired household was £5,200 in 2007/08, compared with £2,800 for non-retired.

As the population gets older, the overall cost will rise.

To cope hospitals and local councils will need to come up with drastic and forward-thinking measures. If, for instance, almost ten per cent of an areas population is over 85, more people are likely to need hospital treatment, support in their home or even a care home to live in.

If society can't meet this demand there will be an increase in hospital bed-blocking, where patients clog up hospital wards because the necessary after care is unavailable. This will increase pressure on hospitals that are already over-stretched.

On a personal level people will need to think hard about their pensions. If you are going to live longer once you've retired, you'll need more money to enjoy retirement.

We may see people work for longer - or perhaps more of our elderly keeping their finances ticking over by doing part-time jobs.

Of course those jobs will need to be available in the first place.

Outbound passport checks start with no fuss and no long queues

It was feared the introduction of exit checks for cross-Channel travellers this week was going to see snaking queues and long waits while passengers had their passports details verified. There was even talk of Operation Stack having to be used, but that's not been the case, as **Jamie Weir** finds out...

THE crackdown on illegal immigration began earlier this week, when exit checks were introduced for all outbound travellers leaving Britain.

Many warned that there could be travel chaos when the new checks were brought into force, with even Sir Charles Montgomery, the director general of Border Force, admitting to MPs in February that there were 'difficulties' logging passport data for coach groups.

But instead of the queues which had been predicted, there was little impact on cross-Channel travellers at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

According to a spokesman for P&O Ferries, the first 24 hours had been fine for the company.

He said: "There had been real concerns across the industry initially, with serious worries that the system would be launched ahead of the Easter weekend, one of our busiest times. Thankfully, government listened to us, and decided to put the launch back until this week when we are having a much quieter period."

IMMIGRATION MINISTER: James Brokenshire

Alongside the changed launch date, the Home Office decided to change how the new exit checks would be implemented, deciding to phase them in to help give stretched operators breathing space.

A Home Office spokesman told KoS: "Due to the different environments and scale of operations at ports, delivery approaches will vary. The Home Office has worked with carriers and ports to allow them to introduce exit checks in a way that aligns with their existing systems, including taking a phased approach at some ports, to help minimise the impact on customers and on port operations."

That phased approach means that at the Port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel, operators don't have to verify every passport examined yet.

The new exit checks will mean that operators such as P&O Ferries have to scan, and then verify the passports of travellers as they leave the UK.

With around 20 million people crossing to the Continent using the Channel Tunnel, and a further 12 million travelling by ferry, the concern was that could place an impossible strain on operators.

The spokesman for P&O Ferries told KoS the company had been relieved that it was being allowed to phase the exit checks in.

He said: "The transitional arrangements which the government have put in place are helping us to bed in the system.

"We are still scanning all passengers' passports as they are coming through, but at this point, we don't have to verify all of them. There has also been a lot of publicity to ensure people are aware of exactly what is taking place.

"That means that those travelling have their passports to hand, ready to be scanned in."

PASSPORTS: The government staggered the introduction but operators went ahead with the new checks anyway

All passports of those leaving the country began being scanned on Wednesday, but just a quarter of them are being verified with the Home Office.

However, next month the proportion required to be verified will increase to 50 per cent, and by the middle of June, it is expected that every passport scanned is verified.

This data sharing with the Home Office will help government get a clearer picture of exactly who is staying in the country, and who has left.

Immigration minister and Sidcup and Old Bexley MP James Brokenshire said the new checks would help the UK combat visa abuse and give a clearer picture on who stayed in the country after they should have left.

He said: "It is right that we have an immigration system that is fair, that tackles illegal immigration and that clamps down on those who try to cheat the system by staying here when they have no right to do so.

"Exit checks will provide us with vital information that confirms a person's exit from the UK. The Coalition Government committed to reintroducing them in 2010 and the Immigration Act 2014 put in place legislation which gave carrier and port staff the powers to carry out these checks.

"Port and travel operators are experts in their business and know their customers best, which is why we've supported them to design and trial the systems for collecting data in a way that will minimise the impact on customers."

He also said that the new checks would help the UK Border Force to clamp down on abuses of the system.

Mr Brokenshire said: "The data collected from exit checks will improve our ability to identify and tighten the immigration routes that are most vulnerable to abuse."

That isn't something which the Labour Party's shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, agrees is the case.

She says the checks have been poorly implemented, which will cause problems for operators and travellers.

She said: "This new system will only allow for partial checks because they haven't got the work done with the operators in time, and they still won't be able to use the information to check who has left and who has overstayed their visa.

"The government have spent years in delays, foot dragging and contractual wrangling and now there are still far too many gaps in our border checks.

"A Labour government will bring in stronger border controls including a full system of exit checks to count people in and out of the country, as well as 1,000 more border staff so we can tackle illegal immigration and make sure visas are enforced."

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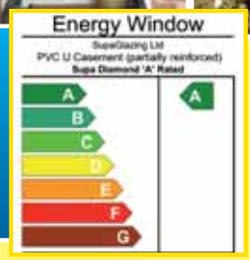

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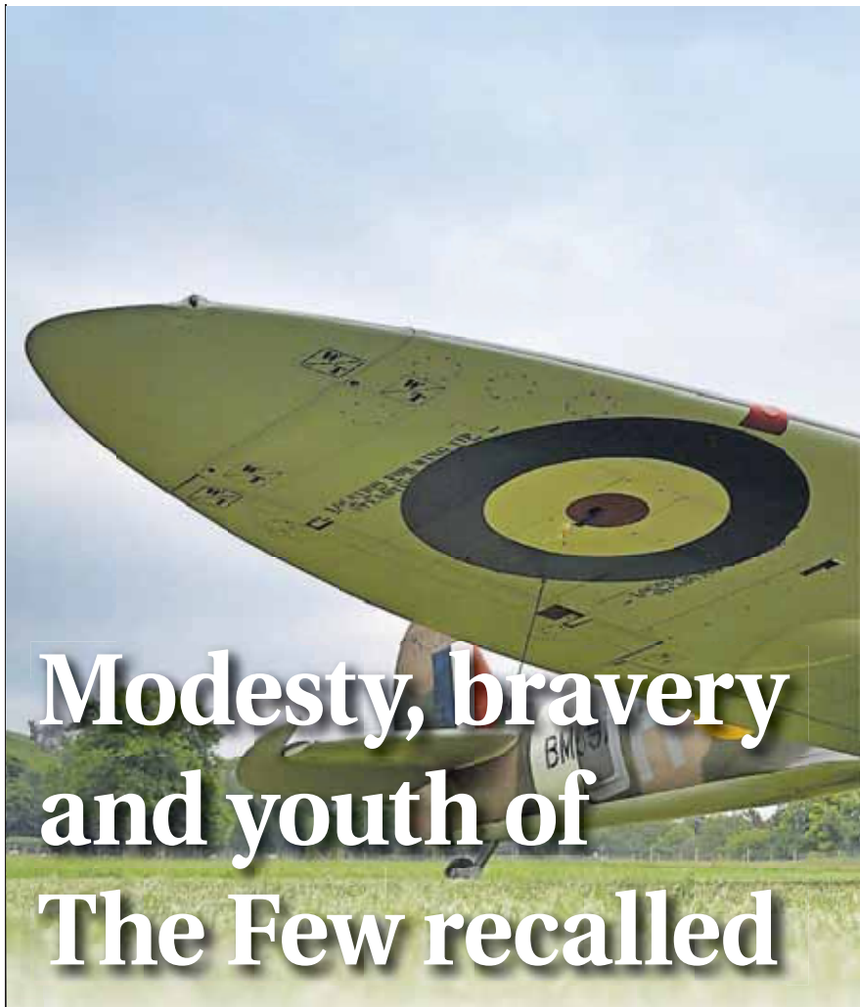

Modesty, bravery and youth of The Few recalled

It is 75 years this year since the Battle of Britain. **Molly Kersey** talks to some of the veterans who fought in the conflict in the skies over Kent...

"NEVER in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Seventy-five years after the Battle of Britain darkened the skies, the poignant words of Winston Churchill still ring true.

The Few were the RAF airmen who fought the aerial battle during the Second World War, guarding the country from enemy fire in Hurricanes and Spitfires.

They shot down some 2,000 German Luftwaffe aircraft, showing incredible bravery that is honoured to this day.

At the forefront of the British resistance, men of all different ages and nationalities fought against German forces to prevent a horrendous occupation that many other countries in Europe were suffering.

Some of these pilots were just teenagers, giving up their carefree youth so we could enjoy ours today.

Now there are just a handful of these heroes left.

Tony Garforth Pickering served with 32 and 501 squadrons.

He told KoS: "We had a job to do and we did it. I was 19 when I joined the RAF. I joined in 1939, just before the war started. My whole life changed.

"I was a young 19-year-old and we were plunged into the middle of a war. Within days, not weeks, but days, we were engaged with an enemy who had years and years of experience."

Mr Pickering, originally from Rugby, was sent into battle after just a few flights, facing the German bombers attacking Britain.

"Their pilots were much more experienced but we had more senior pilots who protected us, looked after us and taught us," he said.

And despite his young age, he undertook the challenge courageously.

He said: "When you are very young you don't think too much of the future, you think more of what's happening at the time."

The pilots flew Hurricanes and Spitfires, single-seat monoplanes which both carried four pairs of Browning machine guns and played a crucial role in the defence.

The Hurricane was a robust aircraft, but the Spitfire's fragile appearance belied its aerodynamic firepower.

"The planes were very comfortable," said Mr Pickering.

"We could look after ourselves. They were capable of taking on the German aircraft."

On September 11, 1940, the engine of his plane was hit by return fire from a bomber that he was attacking.

He bailed out, "slightly scorched", and landed in the Guards' Depot at Caterham, in Surrey.

Others, sadly, were not so fortunate.

The conflict saw a huge number of casualties, with some 500 of the 'dear fighter boys', as they were referred to by Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, losing their lives between July and October 1940.

A further 800 men did not survive to see the end of the war in 1945.

Wing Commander Paul Farnes served with Mr Pickering after he was posted to 501

Continues on page 16

ICONIC: The Spitfire, along with the Hurricane, kept the Luftwaffe at bay

BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL

TONY Pickering and Paul Farnes were among those greeted by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh when they paid a visit to the Battle of Britain Memorial in Capel-le-Ferne.

The Queen opened The Wing, a new £3.5 million centre which has been built by the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, who will be running it.

The building, which is shaped like a Spitfire wing, offers a range of educational facilities and an extensive view of the Channel.

The eye-catching building, designed by Folkestone-based architectural practice Godden Allen Lawn and built by Epps Construction, opened to the public on March 28.

The centre features the Scramble Experience, an audio-visual affair which aims to appeal to people of all ages, recreating a day in the life of The Few during 1940.

Schools can also bring pupils to the Geoffrey Page Centre, named in honour of the man who inspired the building.

The Trust has gone to great efforts to ensure that the legacy of the men who fought is not forgotten.

Mr Pickering said: "I have been coming down here for the last 20 to 30 years.

"It's nice that people remember not just me but those that gave their lives - my comrades."

MODEST HEROES: Wing Commander Paul Farnes (above) and Squadron Leader Tony Pickering

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Continued from page 14

Squadron, based at Gravesend.

Mr Farnes said: "We were trained as fighter pilots and I had been flying since early 1938, so by the time the Battle of Britain started I had already flown Hurricanes and had quite a bit of experience. I was very lucky."

Mr Farnes was commended for his actions in battle, awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal in 1940 and commissioned as an officer.

But he said that other people with less training had lost their lives.

"Many of the new pilots coming in in 1939 or 1940 had little to no experience and I am afraid many of them didn't last very long," he said.

"Quite often those that came in didn't last 24 hours. They would come in one day and then be shot down the next.

"One day it could be very bad and the next it could be all right."

There is a memorial commemorating the sacrifice of the men who gave their lives at Capel-le-Ferne.

Managed by the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, it features the Christopher Foxley-Norris memorial wall, which lists the names of all those who took part in the battle, and a replica Spitfire and Hurricane.

Mr Farnes added: "I was 20 when I joined and 21 just after the Battle of Britain started, which was about average age.

"501 Squadron was the only squadron in the Battle of Britain that didn't have a break. All the others had a couple of weeks' break, but for some reason we went the whole way without a break at all."

Surviving German pilots who had been shot down were kept as prisoners of war in a variety of places across the UK.

Some of the prisons were built from scratch and others were in disused factories or industrial buildings.

But despite the conflict, animosity was put to one side.

Mr Pickering explained: "When we shot people down they became prisoners of war. We would go and shake their hands and make sure they were looked after.

"Although they were the enemy, they were pilots like us and we wanted them to be well looked after. We did respect them for what they did."

The county played an important role in the battle, with Biggin Hill serving as one of the principal fighter bases during the conflict and RAF Hawkinge being used as an airfield by both the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force.

Mr Farnes said: "Our base was at Gravesend but we would fly from there very early in the morning down to Hawkinge, which is only a very short flight, and then we would operate from there during the day and fly back to the base during the night. It worked very well."

Mr Pickering, who was based at Biggin Hill and Gravesend, added: "I had very little training. I came straight from training school.

"The first aircraft I flew was down in Hawkinge, near the coast at Folkestone. We were flying them within 24 hours."

And he has fond memories of the time that he spent in the county.

REMEMBERED: Some of The Few gathered in 2010 and the statue of the lone airman (top right) staring out to sea at the Battle of Britain Memorial

"The people of Kent were very kind to us," he said.

"They only had to see the pilot badges on our chest and they would come up to us, especially ladies with children, and say 'keep them away boys, keep them away!'

"They would give us a kiss or put their arms around our shoulders, and these were ladies of about 30 or 40 - old enough to be my mother!

"They really looked after us."

And one society, still in existence today, made a particular effort to embrace the pilots.

"The Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men invited us out for meals. I wasn't a Kentish man but they treated me like I was," said Mr Pickering.

The Association was founded in 1897 with the aim of furthering the good name of Kent and the people who live here, with branches all over the county.

They certainly succeeded in this case.

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MANSTON: The airport is the number one issue

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Ed Targett (Green)
Frances Rehal (Lab)
George Cunningham (Lib Dems)
Piers Wauchope (Ukip)
Roger Gale (Con)

Thanet set for more Gale-force politics?

Maria Chiorando continues our constituency guides...

WHILE its southern counterpart is attracting the full glare of the country's media spotlight, North Thanet too has its issues.

The home of Manston Airport - one of the county's most contentious business stories - as well as a hotbed of unemployment and controversial local planning, this seat may lack the big media names of its neighbour South Thanet, but has as nuanced a story.

With Conservative stalwart Sir Roger Gale at the helm since its inception in 1983, the seat may look like a shoo-in.

After all, he has won with extremely comfortable majorities in every election, with the exception of 1997, when Labour's popularity slashed the margin to 2,766.

But Sir Roger's not taking anything for granted.

EXPERIENCED: Sir Roger Gale

"I never do, ever," he said.

"I lost my first by-election in 1982, by 279 votes, and since then I've understood what a marginal seat is. On paper, this may not seem like one, and the pundits may not think it's one, but I treat it like it is.

"I've been here for 32 years – I have nowhere to hide. People know me and it's up to them to make a judgement. I stand on my reputation – when you've been around for as long as I have, you will make enemies."

The incumbent will be facing Ukip's Piers Wauchope, Labour's Frances Rehal, George Cunningham from the Lib Dems, the Green Party's Ed Targett, and Independent candidate Cemanthe McKenzie.

One of the most interesting factors to watch will be the rise of Ukip, who fared poorly in 2010, with candidate Rosamund Parker in fourth place with just 6.5 per cent of the vote. But now, with Ukip's popularity on the rise, and party leader Nigel Farage standing in South Thanet, Piers Wauchope has high hopes.

"Having Nigel standing so close goes both ways," he explained.

"Obviously his campaign brings with it lots of hostile coverage in the media, but he is very popular, and we work together on some things.

"Morale is high, and we are canvassing all the time. Our own polls are suggesting we'll do better than most people think."

The Liberal Democrats' George Cunningham is also confident.

"North Thanet used to be a safe Tory seat. That's history now," he said.

"In the 2010 election, Liberal Democrats and Labour were almost equal second to the Tories. Ukip's recent emergence has turned 2015 into a four-way fight."

Labour's Frances Rehal has said she is 'hopeful', while Independent Cemanthe McKenzie said: "At the moment, it is anyone's guess - and I think I have a good chance."

In terms of local issues, Manston Airport is top of the agenda.

The airfield, which shut in May last year, at a cost of 140 jobs, is a contentious issue, with many wanting it to reopen.

The land has been earmarked for 'mixed-use' development by Chris Musgrave and Trevor Cartner, who were behind Sandwich's Discovery Park.

Sir Roger has teamed up with Thanet South Conservative candidate Craig Mackinlay and transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin. Together, they have put together a five-point plan to restore the airfield to a functioning cargo business.

Their plans include encouraging Thanet District Council to use a compulsory purchase order - where official bodies can buy land without the owner's consent.

But Mr Wauchope said he was "extremely cynical" about the plan.

"It is electioneering plain and simple," he said.

"Having done nothing over the last few years, they now have a plan and are holding rallies. The reality is, they won't do anything about it."

Labour's Frances Rehal has also criticised the Conservatives over the management of the Manston situation.

"The North and South Thanet wards both had Tory MPs. The airport has been shut for almost a year now, and they have hardly been proactive in coming up with a solution," she said.

But Sir Roger said: "I have been involved with Manston for 20 years. It's not just electioneering.

"I raised the issue with David Cameron at Prime Minister's Questions last year, when he said he would do all he could to help. Many people like to jump on a bandwagon - locally, Nigel Farage is called Bandwagon Farage.

"He and fellow Ukippers attach their names to causes they haven't been involved with. When the transport minister came down to the airport, Ukip were notable by their absence.

"Manston is not, and has not been, about political point scoring for me, unlike Ukip who are non-entities."

Mr Cunningham has also made his support for the airport clear.

Independent candidate Cemanthe McKenzie has a different take on the issue.

"There is a lot of hearsay surrounding Manston, and people who are strongly for and against it running as an airport," she said.

"I would offer the people a referendum on what they wanted."

It is the Green Party's Ed Targett alone who has taken a firm stance against the airfield.

"Manston Airport - loss-making to the tune of millions annually - should not be forcibly brought back to a half-life via large injections of taxpayers' money," he said.

PREVIOUS RESULTS

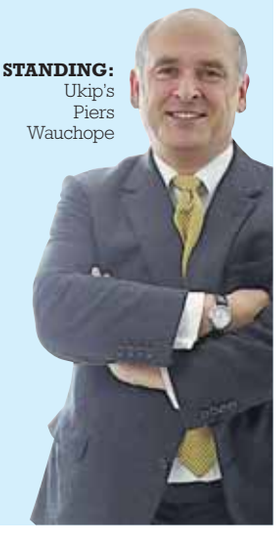
Past general election results for North Thanet:

2010
Sir Roger Gale (Con) 22,826 (52.7%)
Michael Britton (Lab) 9,298 (21.5%)
Laura Murphy (Lib Dem) 8,400 (19.4%)
Rosamund Parker (Ukip) 2,819 (6.5%)

Majority 13,528 (31.2%)

2005
Sir Roger Gale (Con) 21,699 (49.6%)
Iris Johnston (Lab) 14,065 (32.2%)
Mark Barnard (Lib Dem) 6,279 (14.4%)
Timothy Stocks (Ukip) 1,689 (3.9%)

Majority 7,634 (17.5%)



STANDING: Ukip's Piers Wauchope

Continued on Page 20

Continued from page 19

"The new owners should ensure their plans for the site create the jobs this area so desperately needs."

Development is also high on the agenda. With a draft local plan that includes 12,000 houses, there is concern about where these will be built.

"We don't want development on grade A agricultural land," Mr Wauchope said.

"All these houses are being proposed because of Conservative legislation under the Localism Act - the disgraceful thing is that the Conservatives, having taken large contributions from developers, then had to let them have a say in development laws - they can build where it should not be allowed."

To some extent, Sir Roger agreed. "The building of so many houses on such high quality land is unacceptable," he said.

"Housing is needed for local people - that is who must benefit, not the overspill from London.

"We need the agricultural land to grow food. There are many brownfield sites that would make better alternatives - such as the old MoD barracks on the Manston airport site."

"It's also not just a case of building houses. The proper infrastructure has to be there to support them - the doctors, the transport, the school places. It's important to note the plan is just a proposal at this point."

Liberal Democrat candidate George Cunningham added: "Thanet needs real communities that meet human needs.

"Vigilance must be exercised to ensure the wholesale rejection of the plan's housing policy through the recent consultation does not lead Thanet District Council to use it as a reason to insist Manston airport becomes the brownfield housing site for Thanet "by popular demand".

Further local issues raised by Sir Roger include the regeneration of Herne Bay town centre, with new sports facilities and pier.

KOS PREDICTS...

NORTH Thanet has been true blue since its inception, with incumbent Sir Roger hoovering up votes in 2010.

While there has been talk of Ukip's rise splitting right-wing votes, it is hard to imagine this overturning Sir Roger's enormous majority - though the race between the other parties may make a dent in it.

This seat is likely to remain Conservative - and fairly comprehensively too.

High-profile Tory is set to keep his seat

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

SEVENOAKS has existed as a seat since 1885, and with the exception of one year in 1923, it has always been a Tory stronghold.

Michael Fallon has held the seat since 1997. While many seats in the country saw a Labour landslide in that election, Mr Fallon claimed a majority of 10,461.

Mr Fallon is also the defence secretary, which is the highest cabinet post an MP from Sevenoaks has ever held. He faces the Liberal Democrat candidate Alan Bullion, who came second in 2010, with 10,561 votes to Mr Fallon's 28,076. The rest of the candidates are new to the constituency: the Green Party's Amelie Boleyn, Ukip's Stephen Lindsay and Labour's Chris Clark.

INCUMBENT: Michael Fallon

CANDIDATES

Full list of confirmed candidates:

Alan Bullion (Lib Dems)
Amelie Boleyn (Green)
Chris Clark (Lab)
Stephen Lindsay (Ukip)
Michael Fallon (Con)

Many, including Ms Boleyn, describe the seat as a safe one.

She said: "I am not expecting to win here: the aim is to make an impact.

"Having a Green candidate means the voters have progressive representation, and I am hoping they will vote with their consciences."

Ukip's Stephen Lindsay is more confident. "I would not have stood in the first place if I didn't think I had a chance," he said.

"I am standing against a high-profile MP, but maybe voters realise an MP who doesn't hold a cabinet position will have more time to spend on local issues."

Alan Bullion of the Lib Dems is also feeling optimistic. "It's going to be tough, no doubt about it," he said. "But we have got it all to play for."

Labour's representative Chris Clark admits it's a 'challenging' constituency. But he said: "I am relishing the challenge.

"I am getting very positive feedback, and I'm giving it my best shot. I don't think Michael Fallon has served the best interests of the people, and it seems others are feeling that way too."

For Mr Fallon, there is no such thing as a safe seat. He told KoS: "I have never approached it in that way, and will be fighting a vigorous campaign.

"Politics today is more volatile than ever, and no party can take any seat for granted."

One issue dominating the agenda for many is the proposed Weald of Kent Grammar School annexe. While it is against the law to build new grammar schools, the annexe would be an extension of the existing school.

Campaigners have long fought for it, but the Government decision, expected in January, was put off until after the election.

Mr Lindsay said: "I think grammar schools improve social mobility. They

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KOS PREDICTS...

HIS detractors think Mr Fallon has been hit badly by the grammar school fall-out.

This, combined with the rise of Ukip and the Green Party, could see votes whisked away from the Tory.

But in an area that is bluer than blue, and with such a high-profile candidate, it's hard to see this going anyone else's way on May 7.

are the state-funded equivalent of public schools.

"This is very important for so many people in the area who wanted to see approval granted."

Labour's Mr Clark was less enthusiastic about the selective system.

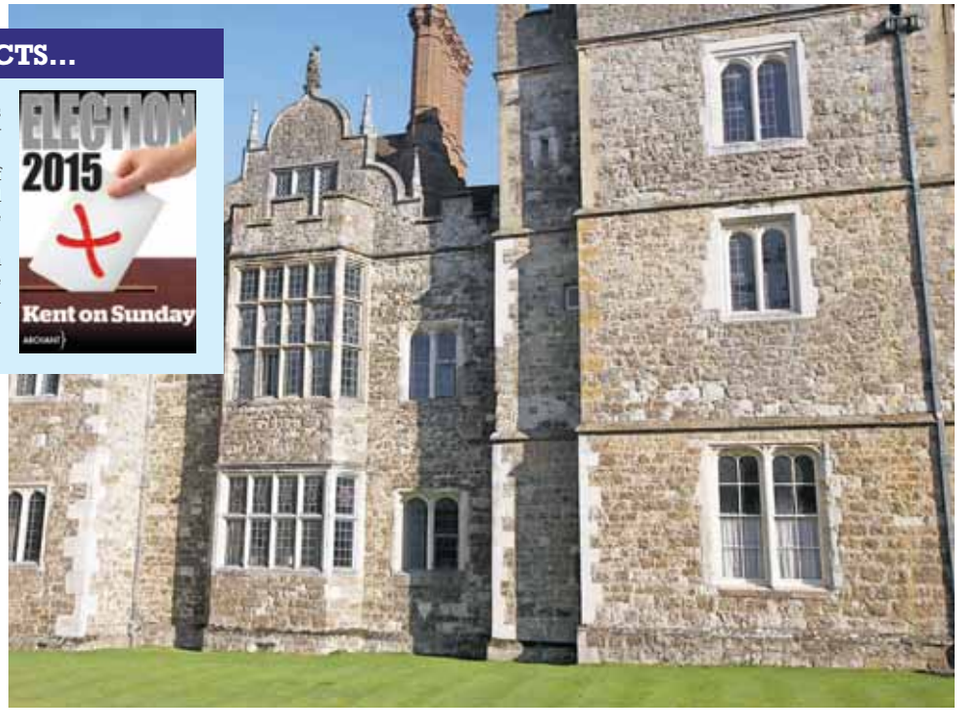
"I think segregation on the basis of performance, or gender, is damaging," he said.

"What we want to see is a truly comprehensive education system with selection within schools."

While not a fan of the selective system per se, the Greens' Ms Boleyn said: "It's a difficult one, as we desperately need more secondary school provision in the constituency.

"There are children leaving home at 7am to get to school by 9am, which is ridiculous. We need more local places. I am opposed to social exclusion in principle though."

Mr Bullion added: "Years of Conservative ineptitude both locally and nationally have led to there not being enough secondary school spaces. We need to sort this out."



LEAFY: Sevenoaks' Knole House. The constituency itself is as blue and blue can be...

For incumbent Mr Fallon, it is the influx of students from neighbouring areas that can pose an issue.

"We have local children travelling for miles, but we are seeing children coming in from London boroughs - even north of the river - and from East Sussex to our schools," he said.

"We need to get the annexe open."

An issue raised by both Mr Fallon and Mr Lindsay is that of travellers using special minority status to influence planning permission.

This means anyone falling into that bracket might be granted planning permission more easily, theoretically leading to unpopular development in open spaces. Mr Fallon said: "We really need to protect the green belt from development."

Across the board, travel was an important topic, with all candidates saying commuters need a fairer deal with the cost of rail travel.

Mr Fallon and Mr Bullion also cited the possibility of expanding the Oyster travel card system to Sevenoaks.

Mr Fallon would also like to see better compensation for passengers disrupted by work at London Bridge.

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Past general election results for Sevenoaks:

2010

Michael Fallon (Con) (56.8%)	28,076
Alan Bullion (Lib Dem) (21.4%)	10,561
Gareth Siddorn (Lab) (13.2%)	6,541
Christopher Heath (Ukip) (3.6%)	1,782
Paul Golding (BNP) (2.8%)	1,384
Louise Uncles (Eng Dem) (1.6%)	806
Mark Ellis (Ind) (0.5%)	258

Majority 17,515 (35.4%)

2005

Michael Fallon (Con) (51.8%)	22,437
Ben Abbotts (Lib Dem) (21.9%)	9,467
Tim Stanley (Lab) (21.0%)	9,101
Robert Dobson (Ukip) (3.0%)	1,309
John Marshall (Eng Dem) (1.7%)	751
Mark Ellis (UK Pathfinders)	233 (0.5%)

Majority 12,970 (30%)

GREEN: Amelie Boleyn

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Friday 31st July 2015 – £445.00
A day out on The Torbay Express is a chance to sit back, relax and enjoy train travel as it used to be in bygone days when steam was king and everyone travelled to their summer holiday on the English Riviera aboard a train. The Torbay Express steam-hauled train follows the route of Brunel's picturesque Great Western Railway, speeding across the Somerset levels and around the beautiful Devon coastline on one of the most enchanting railway journeys in the world. During your holiday you will have free time in Bath which includes a visit to the Roman Baths.

Coronation Street Tour – 3 Days
Sunday 16th August 2015 – £225.00
For a limited period, visitors will be able to take a tour behind the scenes and walk down the famous cobbles of the Coronation Street Quay Street set. You will have chance to tour the corridor of the stars, showcasing actors past and present, watch rare footage and reminisce memorable scenes and favourite characters, visit some of the interior sets where key scenes were filmed, and never before open to the public and walk down Coronation Street and have your photo taken at the Rovers Return. Studio guides will share fascinating facts and stories from over 50 years of filming.

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Dreamland all set to capture new hearts with 'retro' style

Anticipation is mounting for the opening of the new-style but old-look Dreamland amusement park. Boasting 'a vintage theme with a twist', the Margate attraction says it will offer 'a complete reinvention of seaside fun. Fun, food, dance and thrills...' It could certainly put the coastal town firmly back on the tourist map. **Maria Chiorando** looks at what visitors can expect to see...

CAPTURING THE PAST: Dreamland has a place in the heart of many people in Kent

DREAMLAND - the theme park described as the jewel in Margate's crown – is set to re-open on June 19.

Following a decade-long battle to save the attraction, Dreamland, as re-imagined by design team Wayne and Geraldine Hemingway, will have a number of rides and different types of entertainment.

And the public is certainly keen – when tickets went on sale, hundreds queued for their chance to get the first glimpse of the park.

The first 500 also bagged themselves a piece of wood from the Grade II listed Scenic Railway - Britain's oldest rollercoaster, and the showpiece ride.

Eddie Kemsley, Dreamland CEO, has said the new look is "something totally new and totally different, so we say we're re-imagining it.

"It will be vintage-themed but with a twist – something that people have never seen before.

"No other place in the world is doing what we're going to do. It's a complete reinvention of seaside fun. Fun, food, dance and thrills – that's what we're going to deliver."

Dreamland will certainly be a key part of Margate's reinvention as a destination in itself.

"There is a palpable feeling of energy throughout Margate, with a grassroots creative revolution that only looks set to continue as more and more young artists continue to make the move," Mr Hemingway said.

"I can't think of a better time for Dreamland to open and once again thrill holidaymakers from far and wide."

Many people have fond memories of summer weekends at Dreamland, but for those too young or new to the county, here's what they missed.

Dreamland is thought to be the oldest amusement park in Great Britain, and the park dates back to the early 1860s.

Known as the 'Hall by the Sea', it was operated by the famous circus owner, 'Lord' George Sanger.

The park changed hands many times over the decades, finally closing in 2005 following years of decline. There were plans to turn it into a retail and residential site.

It was sold to the Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company for £20 million, but Thanet District Council finally bought it last September using a compulsory purchase order.

The creative team appointed by the Dreamland Trust, the group that emerged from the campaign to save the venue and that has worked to secure public funding, have been on board ever since, with Red Or Dead designers Wayne and Geraldine Hemingway at the helm.

They have been working with a fairly tight budget – a total of £18m, which has come from Thanet District Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the SEA Change programme, which is Government-funded.

That's the history sorted - so what sort of rides can we expect to thrill and entertain us?

Of course there is the Scenic Railway, but in addition to this, there is a series of rides spanning centuries, including the Giddee-Up! – lovingly restored ornate galloping horses - and a reproduction helter-skelter representing the 1920s.

The Kiss Me Quick Caterpillar, from the 1930s, gets its name from the bobbing motion of the cars as it lollops around the undulating track. Back in the day, the chance to take a ride in total darkness became particularly favourable with courting couples.

1940s-style rides are the Double Decker, a double-stacked merry-go-round, and the Vintage Pedal Car Roadway, a driving school for children.

1950s-style rides include Hurricane Jets and a Cyclone Twist, a ride

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BIG DRAW: The park promises a new take on seaside fun

that originally premiered at Butlins.

Rides from the 1960s are the Wedgwood Tea Cup ride, a British overhaul of a funfair cup-and-saucer ride, and Monotopia, a custom-made pedal car monorail.

From the 1970s there are the Chair-o-Plane, a Waveswinger swing ride and Dream Dodgems.

And from the 1980s, you'll find the 35-metre Ferris Wheel, the Counter Culture Caterpillar Coaster, which is a figure-of-eight roller coaster that speeds past portraits of pop culture icons, and an undulating fun slide called Born Slippy.

From the 1990s there are the Jumping Pirate Boats.

And from today? Drop Tower, the park's most adrenaline-fuelled ride.

Dreamland opens on Friday, June 19, with standard opening hours of 10am to 5pm. On summer weekends (June 26 to September 26), the park is open from 10am to 8pm.

Entry is free for under-threes and disabled carers, £14.95 for adults and £12.95 for children if booked in advance, £13.95 for local adults and £11.95 for local children on the day, and £17.95 for non-local adults and £14.95 for non-local children on the day.

To book tickets, visit www.dreamland.co.uk.

Advertisement Feature

Change Lives... Find out about fostering.

Fostering is possibly one of the most rewarding things you will ever do. Making a real difference to children's lives is a unique and immensely satisfying privilege.

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Many people considering a career as a foster carer think that the local council is their only option. Most are completely unaware that independent fostering organisations even exist.

Next Step Fostering was established 25 years ago by Maureen and Alb Ward – who were foster carers themselves – and therefore had personal experience of caring for vulnerable children. Next Step Fostering remains a family company to this day, with Registered Manager Neil McCarthy, and Director Lesley Ward's involvement with the company stretching back over twenty years.

Next Step provides a range of fostering services through offices in Kent. London and The Thames Valley and work in partnership with many Local Authorities across the South East of England.

A national shortage of foster carers means that children who cannot live with their family are being moved away from their home communities, resulting in a change of school, community, friends and religious contacts. Every day, Next Step receives child referrals from Local Authorities, but due to the high levels of demand, do not have sufficient families to meet the needs of the many children being referred.

As a family run company, Next Step Fostering is able to offer a personal, individual service to its foster carers and children. Supervision, support and training can be tailored to individual needs and foster carers have an open invitation to approach Lesley Ward directly to discuss any issues they may have.

Fostering a child is not an easy task, but it is extremely rewarding – and thanks to the generous allowance Next Step Fostering pays, many people give up unfulfilling jobs to undertake a career in fostering, where they feel they can really make a difference to young lives.

Mary Cattell, an ex-carer herself and now Manager of the Chatham office, said "People often worry that they won't be suitable, based on things they have heard from friends or the media, but I would encourage anyone thinking about fostering to speak to us directly. We can answer all of their questions about the type of people we are looking for and what fostering is like."

If you are considering a career in fostering or simply want to learn more, call into Next Step Fostering's Chatham office, at 85 High Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4EE.

Alternatively you can call the Chatham office on 01634 838666 and speak to a member of their friendly team or visit their website at www.nextstepfostering.org

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Triennial's visitor and cash boost

Folkestone's arts festival was all about creativity - but its figures were very impressive too, with 135,000 visitors spending £2.7m, writes **Sarah Linney**...

THE Folkestone Triennial art festival brought hundreds of thousands of people to the town last year – who spent a massive £2.7 million.

Some 135,000 people came to the nine-week festival, which is the largest regular exhibition of new public art in the UK, and the online coverage attracted more than 1.6 billion hits.

A total of 21 artists, some of international renown –Yoko Ono is probably the most famous – were commissioned to create sculptures, statues and installations on the theme Look Out. At least nine of the works will remain in the town.

The most memorable work will undoubtedly be Michael Sailstorfer's Folkestone Digs, in which 30 pieces of 24-carat gold were buried on the Outer Harbour beach – and it was finders keepers.

Prospectors from across the county flocked to the shore, shovels at the ready, to see if they could make their fortune – and several struck lucky. No one, apart from the artist, knows how many pieces were buried, so the possibility of finding gold could now be a feature of the beach for evermore.

The festival also featured talks to schools and community groups, workshops for schools and families run by the artists, walking tours by art critics, history tours, two conferences and more.

In a market research survey, 96.3 per cent of visitors to the Triennial rated it as good or excellent.

The visitor total of 135,000 was up compared with the two previous Triennials in 2011 and 2008, which attracted 103,000 and 51,000 people respectively, and 41 per cent of people said they had come to the town primarily for the Triennial.

Organisers the Creative Foundation – a charity set up to improve Folkestone through arts and creativity – said their estimate of £2.7 million of visitor spending was " conservative".

In addition, the festival helped to attract £1.5 million for the redevelopment of Payers Park.

A spokesman for the charity said: "The Creative Foundation is immensely grateful to the festival's supporters, without whom it would not have been possible.

"The Triennial also could not happen without the continuing vision, commitment and financial support of the Roger de Haan Charitable Trust. Their confidence and enthusiasm has led the way for many other contributions of funding and support in kind.

"The significant contribution of Shepway District Council, which involved a number of departments, gave an important indication of the support of local people and businesses, and the positive impact of the Triennial on the local economy.

"Our thanks also go to the many individuals and organisations who gave their time for free, contributed goods and services at reduced or no cost, or allowed the use of their premises."

FOLKESTONE DIGS: Just one of the Triennial's many attractions

ARTS: The Triennial attracted 135,000 people who spent £2.7m in Folkestone last year

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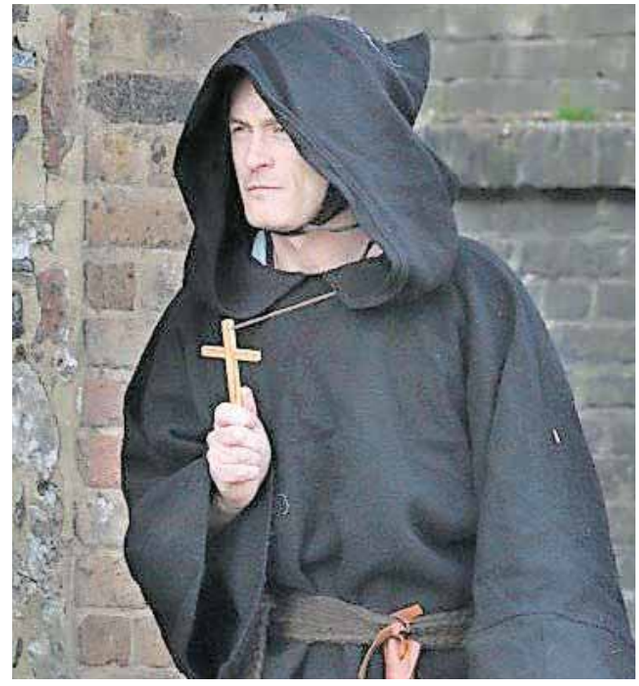
Marvel at misery of medieval medicine at Milton Chantry

Children can learn all about medieval medicine at a heritage centre in Gravesend this Sunday. Historical entertainer Russell Palmer, who is running the event, talks to **Sarah Linney** about leeches, bile and bone saws.



WATCH OUT: There will be leeches, bile and bone saws

EVEN the NHS's most bitter detractors will admit that it has its good points.

No-one tries to use leeches to suck your blood, no-one drills a hole in your skull and no-one tries to saw off your arm. Well, only on a very bad day.

But take a trip back to medieval times and such, ahem, medical procedures were normal.

Historical entertainer and re-enactor Russell Palmer will be teaching children and adults all about the miseries of medieval medicine at a special day at Milton Chantry in Gravesend today (Sunday).

The heritage centre and former chapel will become a scene of shocking surgery and terrifying treatment as Mr Palmer, dressed as a monk, demonstrates how illnesses and injuries were treated in medieval times.

Yes, a monk. "The monks did everything," Mr Palmer explained.

"Doctors were one of the lowest-paid professions, and they weren't really trusted. Most of their patients would probably die anyway, which didn't do a lot for your business."

People believed that illness was a direct result of evil behaviour or lack of holiness, and thought that sufferers of diseases like leprosy – who would be kept in an enclosed area away from the main chancery so no-one else could catch the disease - had brought it on themselves.

If you were ill, your first remedy would be to pray.

"You weren't allowed to do surgery, because people thought you were sticking your hands into someone's soul. Everything that was done was on the outside – and there were no drugs and no anaesthetics," Mr Palmer said.

"If someone had a really severe headache, they would drill a hole in their skull. Or you might saw off limbs with a bone saw.

"In battle, even if you were wearing armour, if you used your arm as a shield, the sword could still break your arm - and getting chain mail off someone with a broken arm is very difficult.

"They would have had contingents of monks dragging people off the field. But they would always go for the people who looked the richest, as if you can get them away from harm they are going to be your best friend for life."

It was the Arabic civilisation, in fact, which helped the western world gain an understanding of anatomy.

"A lot of what westerners learned came from the Muslims, when they went over in the Crusades," Mr Palmer said.

"There were lots of bodies lying around, and the Muslims didn't believe that people's souls were in their bodies, so they could cut people open, and they had fantastic diagrams of what was in the human body.

"We didn't even know blood flowed all the way around the body. Things like cancers and heart attacks wouldn't have been known about.

"You would look at the colour and aroma of someone's urine, and even actually taste it, to try to diagnose what was wrong with them."

But it wasn't all doom and gloom. Trial and error helped people discover what worked, and many medieval remedies – like the use of leeches – have more of a scientific basis than you might think.

"Leeches were used to suck the blood, and suck away the evil. Even if you weren't ill, you would regularly have leechcraft," Mr Palmer said.

"But these days they do use them in hospitals, for example for veterans who have lost limbs, as they will encourage new growth of blood vessels.

"They also understood that maggots would eat dead skin, so by putting maggots on a wound you would get rid of all the dead skin.

"Honey would have been put on a wound, and it is one of the best antiseptics. And they knew that hanging your clothes over the garderobe – the toilet –forces nits and fleas out of clothes, because of the ammonia that builds up over time."

Poor hygiene, of course, did much to encourage the spread of disease – especially the prevalence of nits, lice and fleas.

The most notable consequence of this was the Black Death, which is estimated to have killed between 75 and 200 million people between 1346 and 1353, decimating the European population by between 30 and 60 per cent.

"The plague was spread by fleas on rats biting people. People were covered in fleas and lice," Mr Palmer added.

"You could test to see if someone was a plague victim by seeing if the lymph glands under their armpit are sensitive. If they were, they had four or five days before they were dead.

"If you were living in an area where plague was rife, the chances were you would die. A few people survived the plague, but we lost millions of people to it. The Great Fire of London actually served a very good purpose as it wiped it out."

With all this to contend with, no wonder people were considered old by the time they were 40.

"You weren't considered anything until you reached five years old. The mortality rate for infants was so high that people didn't really expect babies to live, any more than they expected the woman to live through childbirth," Mr Palmer said.

"It was a hard life. No matter how old you were, every corner you turned there was a disease waiting to kill you, or a war waiting to kill you.

"Death was a regular occurrence, and of course they mourned people, but babies tended to be mourned less as they weren't expected to live.

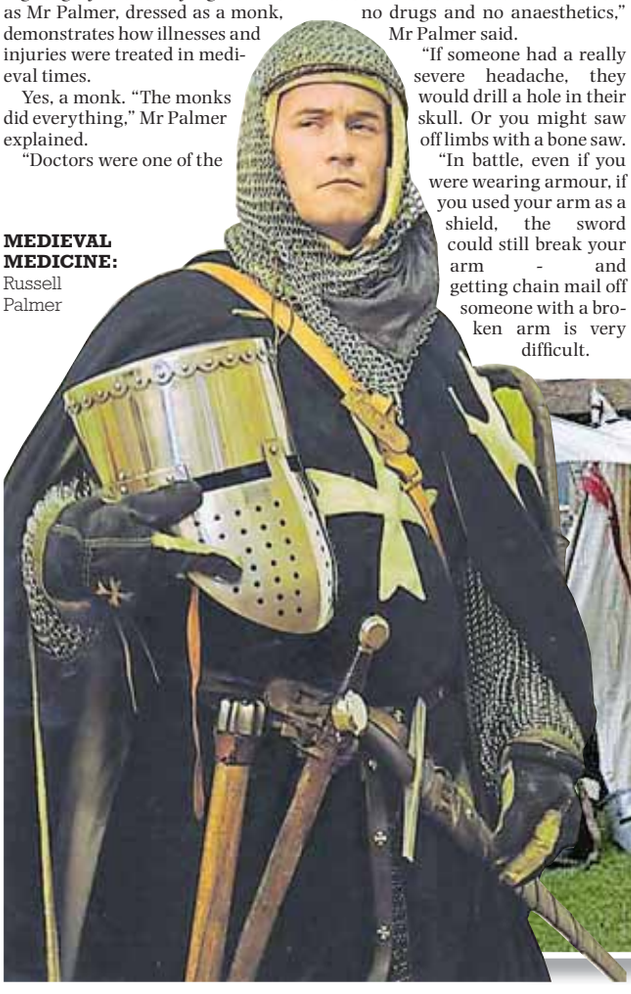
"Life was cheap. Children could quite easily be cast out of the house if they couldn't be fed."

Mr Palmer will be talking about all this and more at the event at Milton Chantry, which runs from noon until 5pm today (Sunday).

"I'll be teaching the kids how to test urine, and there'll be some leechcraft and some removing of limbs," Mr Palmer said.

"I'll have some of my surgery tools with me, including a knife and a bone saw - all dirty and black of course."

■ **Note to parents: there will be no actual surgery, actual urine, actual leeches or actual removing of limbs.) "It's all going to be very light-hearted and funny," Mr Palmer added.**



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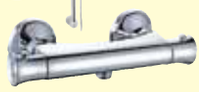

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JOY: The Madness boys still love performing

Pop legends Madness due in Canterbury during tour

Front man Suggs speaks about the joy of performing and their new challenge

SKYROCKETING to fame in the late 1970s, Madness became one of the most prominent bands of the 2 Tone ska revival.

The pop legends, with their recognisable line-up of seven members, have maintained their love of performing to this day.

Now they are gearing up to undertake a new tour, Grandslam Madness, which will see them perform at a selection of the nation's leading sporting grounds, including football, rugby, cricket and racing stadiums.

Kent has made the list of venues, and the band will be making their way to the Spitfire Ground in Canterbury on September 11, to the delight of fans in the county.

The band will be performing classics such as House of Fun, Baggy Trousers and My Girl alongside some new songs - their first new recordings in three years.

As well as bringing Madness to the masses once again, the tour will also be a trip down memory lane for singer Suggs, who first started exploring the UK as a football fan in 1979 before Madness hit the road.

As well as this, he has links to the county, spending seaside holidays in Whitstable, where he still owns a beach hut.

He is looking forward to the upcoming tour.

He joked: "It'll be the greatest tour since Boudica. We'll be going across the countryside rampaging and pillaging. We have our people working on designing a chariot even as we speak.

"If you had told me this when I was a kid I would have laughed so loudly my socks would have flown off.

"Of course it's remarkable and a privelege to still be doing this funny old business that we do."

He added: "It's great to do something new. Something not done before. And it really feels like a tour where people can have fun - where we can have fun."

And he believes that the love of what they do is what has helped the band to keep going for all of these years.

"I think the reason we endure is that we genuinely do enjoy ourselves," he said.

"From the very beginning you could see the joy in the early videos we made and hear it in the records.

"The fact that we were friends before this band started is key.

"I genuinely think the whole spark or art of craft and creativity was a by-product of our friendship.

"I think that's what people feel.

"It's a genuine experience. It's not manufactured.

"I can't even remember being onstage and feeling fed up with the people around me."

He added: "Traditionally, we don't tour for months and months - we gave up on America and they probably gave up on us.

"Touring for years on end is what drains the lifeblood out of a lot of acts that I see.

"Each tour we do we try and make unique and special.

"This one's special as no one's ever done something like this, as big as this, at sporting venues like this. It's a Madness madcap idea and we know people will respond to it."

Continues on page 31

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Continued from page 29

"We can change the setlist nightly if we wish. The main thing is to keep it exciting for yourself, that's the way to ensure the audience is kept excited too."

He added: "It's been very flattering and marvellous to see so many different age groups enjoying the band.

"We are looking forward to this on the tour - people of all ages."

Over the last 25 years of touring the band have seen many changes along the way.

Suggs said: "Last year I did a one-man show, about 130 performances in towns I haven't been to since the early days.

"I've been through a few recessions and a lot of things aren't looking good in a lot of the satellite towns outside London.

"It's a funny old cliche but Madness always seems to do better in times of recession, not that we ever wished that upon anybody.

"Maybe during these periods people need a bit of cheering up and without being trite our raison d'etre has always been about livening up a dull day.

"That was the reason for calling our last album Oui Oui Si Si Ja Ja Da Da - basically yes in several different languages, because there seems to be an awful lot of no, no at the minute and we could do with a lot more yes, yes, yes, particularly in the lower orders of society."

The tour will be taking in 19 shows at sporting venues across the UK.

And the band plan to take a look around Canterbury when they play there in September.

"It is a beautiful town," said Suggs. "I played the Marlowe Theatre last year.

"One of the characters in Wolf Hall is buried there in the Cathedral, Thomas someone.

"I'm not a connoisseur but I'm fond of a nice bit of architecture and one of the nice things about travelling around is being introduced to some nice buildings.

"The Good Pub Guide is a very good organ to have at hand when driving through the backstreets of Great Britain. There are lots of lovely pubs, I must say."

Tickets for Madness' September 11 performance are available to buy now.

They can be purchased by visiting www.ticketmaster.co.uk, www.grandslammadness.co.uk or www.lizhobbsgroup.com.

General admission costs £35 and family tickets, which admit two adults and two children up to the age of 16, are £99.

The Grandslam Madness beer bundle is also available to those who are aged 18 and over and costs £55.

MARVELLOUS: Suggs is 'flattered' that many different age groups enjoy the band's music. Credit: Perou

TOWIE stars in Maidstone

STARS of ITV2 reality show The Only Way Is Essex, Sam and Billie Faiers, have brought their pop-up store to Maidstone.

Minnie's Boutique, at Fremlin Walk, will be open both days this weekend.

Russell Watson on stage

SINGER Russell Watson will be performing at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on April 26.

Often called the 'people's tenor', he is one of the biggest-selling classical artists of all time.

For further details or to book, visit www.atgtickets.com

Story of loss and sorrow

A MOVING depiction of grief will be at the Theatre Royal in Margate on April 30 at 7.30pm.

So It Goes follows the story of Hannah, who is dealing with the death of her dad.

Call 01843 292795 to book.

Comedian takes to stage

SUCCESSFUL comedian Reginald D Hunter will perform at The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on April 30.

The performance is suitable for those aged 18 and over.

Tickets are £24 or £22 with concessions.

To book or for more information, visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

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Outdoor screenings return

AN outdoor screening of Mamma Mia! will take place in Dartford's Central Park on July 29.

The film stars Amanda Seyfried and Meryl Streep.

For details, visit www.dartford.gov.uk/events.

Old buildings discussed

AUTHOR, art historian and TV presenter Dan Cruickshank will be giving a talk at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on April 17 at 7pm.

The Recreation of Lost Buildings will explore what people find irresistible about fine old buildings, the reasons for their disappearance and what people are doing to restore them.

Pub Landlord in Thanet

AL Murray, the Pub Landlord, will be at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on May 3.

He will be perform his show One Man, One Guvnor, and all proceeds will be donated to the Pilgrims Hospice, Thanet.

Tragic tale due in Dartford

MEMORABLE music and searing passion will feature in Verdi's La Traviata.

The opera will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, on May 3.

Based on a true story, it tells the tale of the love and life of consumptive courtesan Violetta.

To book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk

Festival brings classic rock and blues to Maidstone's Mote Park

by Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

CELEBRATION: The festival will feature classic rock, progressive rock, country and blues music

AN annual celebration of rock will be making its way to Kent this summer.

The Ramblin' Man Festival, which brings audiences an amalgamation of music including classic rock, progressive rock, country and blues, will be taking place over the weekend of July 25 and 26.

Created by organisers The Rock Collective and TeamRock, the event will be held at Mote Park in Maidstone after they decided that the 450-acre venue, which has good transport links to London and continental Europe, would provide the perfect backdrop.

It is expected to bring in some £700,000 for Maidstone's economy.

A variety of food will be on offer and a beer festival will also be running in conjuction with the two-day festival.

A variety of accommodation will be available for festival-goers including both hotel and 'glamping' packages.

And the line-up for the international music festival includes a number of renowned acts.

These include The Scorpions, a German rock band who have had three top 20 albums in the UK, and Gregg Allman, who was a member of the American rock band that created the theme tune for BBC2 programme Top Gear.

Another of the performers featured will be Seasick Steve, an American blues musician who has carved out a unique career for himself with his obscure and personalised instruments and his catchy songs.

His popularity in the UK exploded after a New Year's Eve appearance on Jools Holland's Hootenanny in 2006 when he performed a live rendition of Dog House Boogie.

His other hits include Started Out With Nothin' and You Can't Teach An Old Dog New Tricks.

He will be taking to the main stage at the festival.

Blue Oyster Cult, Saxon, Camel and The Pineapple Thief are also due to perform.

Tickets for the festival are £99.

Day tickets for the event are also available and cost £55.

For more information about the festival or to buy tickets for the event, please visit www.ramblinmanfair.com

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Writing a memoir to claim back Pam's identity

The former EastEnders star talks about how she 'put down Pat to find Pam' after leaving the show

Until three years ago, Pam St Clement was best known as EastEnders matriarch Pat Butcher, a brassy blonde who'd had her fair share of men, called a spade a spade and wore some of the most outrageous dangly earrings.

Through her years in the spotlight, she has remained an extremely private person, albeit open about her bisexuality, so it's surprising she has written a memoir, The End Of An Earring.

As well as her career, it charts some intensely personal moments, her failed marriage, her entry onto the gay scene and her shock at executives' decision to kill off Pat.

She was the second longest-serving member of the cast after Adam Woodyatt, who plays Ian Beale, when the character lost her battle with cancer on New Year's Day 2012.

She keeps in touch with her Albert Square pal Barbara Windsor (Peggy Mitchell) and a few others, and took part in a 30th anniversary programme about the soap.

But her departure left a bitter taste for a while.

Ms St Clement had requested time out to recharge her batteries, but had been assured her character wasn't going to be killed off.

"I was upset about it," she admits.

"I wanted to leave and get some air. When you've said, 'The one thing I'd really like is for her not to die', and I was told, 'That won't happen', that's what disappointed me.

MEMOIR: Pam St Clement penned the book to rediscover her identity

"I felt shocked and very let down. I suppose I could have thrown a tantrum and walked out, but that's not me."

It initially left a big void in her life.

"After I left, I had a great dip and I wasn't well. It was all to do with grieving. I do still miss it in a way, because it was family," she added.

The 72-year-old says one of the reasons she wrote the book was to be able to claim her own identity again.

"I had to put down Pat to find Pam," she explained.

"Once I'd finished with her, I had time to think about me and my life."

She hasn't had many enduring relationships in her life, she says.

"I don't think it's a case of finding the right person. I just realise as I've got older that I'm probably better alone. That's not meant to sound sad or self-pitying," she said.

"I see the glass as half full, but I'm also a pragmatist, so I see the reality of life."

Today, she doesn't miss being defined by her EastEnders alter ego.

"I feel all right about Pat now, whereas when I was playing her, it was everything that went with the playing of her and my relationship with the viewers, who saw me as Pat. I was behind that curtain, and now I don't feel like that. Now I feel, 'Hi, old girl, I had a wonderful time playing you, I can live with you'."

The End Of An Earring is published by Headline, priced £16.99.

Comedian due in town

AWARD-WINNING comedian Sarah Millican will be bringing her new Outsider tour to the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, on July 18.

She has appeared as a panellist on shows including 8 Out of 10 Cats, Mock the Week and Would I Lie To You?

For more information or to book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

Barry back in the room

THE star of ITV's new Saturday night show, You're Back in The Room, will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, as part of his tour of the UK.

World-renowned hypnotist Keith Barry uses a combination of mind control, deception and hypnotism to create a memorable show for the audience.

His Brain Hacker show will be performed on September 27. Call 0844 871 3015 to book.

X-Factor stars on stage

A COLOURFUL retelling of a Biblical story, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, will be performed at The Woodville, Gravesend.

X-Factor star Amelia Lily will step into the role of narrator, performing alongside fellow finalist Lloyd Daniel as Joseph.

The production will take place from April 28 to May 2.

For details, visit www.woodville.co.uk

Young orchestra play

THE Lydian Orchestra Easter concert will be held on April 19 at The Drive Methodist Church, Sevenoaks.

Music from Mozart and Beethoven will be performed.

The Lydian gives young musicians in west Kent the chance to play together as an orchestra and members are aged 15 to 25.

Tickets are available on the door and cost £10, or £5 for those under 21.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Target teachers who fail pupils

WITH many Tory MPs in Kent pledging to reform the education system in some of the schools and colleges, what they should and must consider, as many people hope that they do if they win, is sack every single bad teacher in the county.

Any teacher who demoralises their pupils and reduces their potential by being negative and critical about them the whole time should go.

Every student deserves a chance in life, no matter what their capabilities are.

There are so many utterly deluded teachers, who lack any kind of empathy with their young pupils, that are under the illusion that as they are so clever they are then qualified to teach our children.

And don't forget the many teachers who are full of their own importance although they have no real knowledge of the subjects they teach.

Rosie Johnston,
Ightham

Unsure of the bullying issue

FOLLOWING a recent visit to Sevenoaks by Jonathan Berry of the True Freedom Trust, people in local churches are left wondering about the policies of Sevenoaks School, which has recently issued a statement on homophobic bullying.

The statement seems to fail to recognise that it is the issue of bullying, rather than the issue of "homophobia", that makes homophobic bullying wrong.

One has been wondering for some time about the policy of Sevenoaks School (and also the local Knole Academy, which is partly sponsored by Sevenoaks School, and which controversially has replaced the town's previous two single-sex non-selective schools) with regard to a young person who experiences unwanted same-sex attraction and so does not want to be gay.

Given the current political climate, one suspects that such a person would be given counselling aimed at pushing him or her further into homosexuality.

That hardly seems appropriate for someone who does not wish to be gay.

One wonders if any of your readers have experience of how one can successfully lobby on this issue at a local level.

John Humphrey,
Sevenoaks

LETTER OF THE WEEK

RAF Memorial must be seen to be appreciated

BROMLEY council took a brave step in allowing Biggin Hill to operate with minimal additional flying hours. I wish to congratulate the council on this decision, allowing the business, which in my opinion will benefit us all in the long run, to operate in the 21st century.

What a coincidence, and a good omen, that just afterwards, the Queen formally opened the national and international memorial to those brave young men of the RAF known as The Few, who so valiantly fought the might of the German Luftwaffe in their Hurricanes and Spitfires, many paying the ultimate price, so we can live in peace.

The RAF memorial, situated on the cliffs at Capel-Le-Ferne, just outside Folkestone, comprises a two-storey building in the shape of a Spitfire's wing, which houses the new facilities.

These include a museum, shop, cafe, educational and corporate facilities as well as the surrounding car park.

The balcony overlooks the memorial, which is of an airman in full fighter pilot uniform sitting in the centre of a three-blade propellor. Round the base are plaques listing the squadrons that fought in the battle, while in the distance on a clear day, the coast of France can be seen.

The airman is looking out to sea and, like Sir Francis Drake, faces another armada threatening our shores.

In the words of an estate agent 'this memorial must be seen to be appreciated'.

John Gamêt
Keston

Not what airport was bought for

WITH reference to Maria Chiorando's article regarding the future of Manston airport, it is obvious that the current owners would consider the idea of re-opening as an airport as not viable - it is not what they bought it for.

Manston could easily become the fourth runway that London needs. It is linked to the M25 by a road that is a dual carriageway for the majority of its length.

It would not be too difficult to convert it into a motorway.

There is a high speed rail link to Ramsgate, this could easily be extended to the airport, which is only a few miles away.

What is needed is the support of the local council and the MPs who represent Thanet.

It needs to be promoted to the planers who are deciding where the fourth London runway should be. It is obvious that the residents living in the vicinity of Gatwick and Heathrow do not want it in their locality.

If Manston could eventually be opened as a passenger airport it would provide many jobs and be a tremendous boost to the economy of Thanet.

Gary Lock,
Birchington

Dave deserved more respect

HAVING seen your story about Dave the Dolphin I was moved to write to give my views.

I was involved with many other marine conservation groups in trying to help protect the dolphin while in the waters off the coast of Sandgate.

Working alongside local police officers, it was a difficult balance – trying to protect the dolphin while at the same time allowing people to see such an amazing wild mammal in their local area.

Most people understood when they were asked not to get too close or not to disturb the dolphin when at rest (which was usually near the buoy just offshore), however sadly not everyone had the dolphin's best interests at heart and some foolishly even entered the water to try to interact with the dolphin while under the influence of alcohol.

This became the subject of a much publicised court case and resulted in the perpetrators being one of the first charged with disturbing a single wild dolphin.

When Dave was injured and disappeared there were no confirmed sightings afterwards but who knows what happened?

Did the dolphin die due to the injury - if so her body was never found - or is Dave still out there somewhere living the life of a wild dolphin? We can only hope that is the case.

And should another wild dolphin arrive around our shoreline what then?

It would be my hope people will remember the dolphin is a wild animal, not the same as a dolphin you see in a marine park, trained to perform to interact for food.

Wild dolphins are to be admired but also they must be given space and respect.

Margaux Dodds,
Director at Marine Connection

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles:

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Spring lambs in Petham

by **Oliver Mannion**

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Participating Retailers only. Model featured Astra Excite 1.4i 5dr in Power Red from £17,920 on the road, offer price £12,595, and Astra Limited Edition 1.6i 5dr in Power Red from £18,535 on the road, offer price £14,495. Offer available on orders or registrations from 4 March to 1 July 2015, subject to availability. Offer available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only, excluding B2B). All other sales categories are excluded; cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. UK-supplied vehicles only. #Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Correct at time of going to press.

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE SEAT LEON X-PERIENCE: It is both elegant and practical

Estate that thinks it's an SUV

SEAT has created a 4x4 country lifestyle estate that is both elegant and practical – who needs a rufty-tufty SUV? writes Steve Loader...

IN the weird world of today's motor fashion it should be no surprise that while chunky SUVs are increasingly sanitized by front-wheel drive and on-road handling bias, estate cars are sprouting 4x4 and off-road add-ons.

The latest 'transgender' estate is the SEAT Leon X-Perience (from £24,385), something of a mouthful but a pleasing eyeful too, based on the VW Spanish arm's elegant Leon ST (estate).

At its heart is the latest generation VW Haldex all-wheel-drive system, normally driving the front wheels for best economy, but automatically sending power to the rear if loss of traction is detected.

Throw in hill hold control, extra ground clearance, moulded protection for the door sills and wheel arches, plus a pliable suspension more suited to gentle off-road yomping and you have a rather genteel and stylish rural runabout – though city types will no doubt be drawn to its 'country lifestyle' image as well.

It walks the walk in other ways too, thanks to a sizeable 587-litre boot, quickly converted into 1,470 litres with the pull of a lever to fold the rear seats – ideal for the huntin', shootin' and fishin' brigade.

And there's a protective chrome loading sill – useful if you regularly carry a dog.

If you want even more space then sister brand Skoda offers the slightly larger Octavia Scout, but SEAT's arguably sportier image and the classy lines of the X-Perience – finished nicely with integrated fog lamps and twin chrome tailpipes – should be enough to clinch the deal.

Power comes from a 2.0-litre diesel, available in 148bhp guise with six-speed manual box, or 182bhp with six-speed twin-clutch DSG auto/manual.

Standard kit includes: alloys, black roof rails, rear privacy glass, rear parking sensors, dual zone climate control, leather steering wheel with orange stitching and cloth/faux leather front sports seats.

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14 14	Renault Captur 1.5dCi MediaNav 16,761 miles	£12,600
14 14	Renault Captur 1.5dCi MediaNav 15,520 miles	£12,700
14 14	Renault Captur 1.5dCi MediaNav 13,968 miles	£12,800
13 63	Renault Clio 1.2 (MediaNav) Dy 20,632 miles	£8,700
13 63	Renault Clio 1.2 (MediaNav) Dy 18,523 miles	£8,700
13 63	Renault Clio 1.2 (MediaNav) Dy 16,426 miles	£8,800
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12 12	Audi A1 1.6 TDI Sport Sportbac 25,437 miles	£13,900
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14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 3,254 miles	£27,400
14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 2,076 miles	£27,600
14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Sport 4dr 3,885 miles	£27,000
14 14	Infiniti Q50 3.5 S Hybrid AWD 8,785 miles	£34,900
14 64	Infiniti Q70 3.5 GT 4dr Hybrid 1,001 miles	£29,000
14 14	Infiniti QX70 3.0 TD S AWD 5dr 10,016 miles	£34,300

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14 14	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Form Spor 2,563 miles	£7,600
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14 64	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Style 5dr 1,001 miles	£8,500
14 14	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Style Lux 2,500 miles	£8,200

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12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 49,427 miles	£10,700
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12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 14,271 miles	£11,800
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13 13	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 8,394 miles	£12,000
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 23,213 miles	£12,300
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 15,679 miles	£12,400
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 11,180 miles	£12,600
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 7,504 miles	£12,800
14 64	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 5,948 miles	£17,100
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Visia 5dr 19,798 miles	£10,600
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Visia 5dr 6,677 miles	£10,900
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta 5 6,448 miles	£10,200
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta 5 15,744 miles	£10,500
12 12	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta 5 5,927 miles	£10,600
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta P 12,076 miles	£11,400
12 12	Nissan Juke 1.6 16v Acenta Pre 26,069 miles	£10,600
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.6 16v Visia 5dr 18,396 miles	£9,600
12 62	Nissan Note 1.4 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 8,443 miles	£7,800
11 61	Nissan Note 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 16,398 miles	£7,400
11 61	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec 5dr 30,418 miles	£6,000
13 13	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 5,900 miles	£8,300
13 13	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 3,731 miles	£8,400
14 14	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta 7,936 miles	£17,400
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi N-Tec 5 33,185 miles	£13,200
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi N-Tec 5 19,026 miles	£13,900
11 61	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 15,118 miles	£11,200
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 22,005 miles	£11,300
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 15,633 miles	£11,500
13 13	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 12,957 miles	£11,900
12 62	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 dCi N-Tec+ 21,795 miles	£14,800
11 61	Nissan Qashqai 2.0 Acenta 5dr 20,532 miles	£13,300
11 61	Nissan Qashqai 2.0 N-Tec+ 5dr 39,891 miles	£13,600
09 09	Nissan Qashqai 2.0 Tekna 5dr 30,867 miles	£10,000
11 61	Nissan Qashqai+2 1.6 Acenta 5d 22,307 miles	£12,000
11 61	Nissan Qashqai+2 2.0 dCi Tekna 50,296 miles	£17,100

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Looking to Infiniti... and beyond

Revamped Q70 model shows how Nissan's premium marque is shedding its US-centric image and starting to woo UK buyers, writes Steve Loader...

THE Infiniti premium marque is still hampered by US market-led horizons but, as Toy Story's Buzz Lightyear might say, it's closer to going beyond them.

The junior Q50 saloon is now an acceptable left-field alternative to the ubiquitous BMW 3 Series for UK buyers and, after a revamp, the brand's former M range has morphed into the Q70 line-up (from £32,650) to tilt at the 5 Series and the like.

It's an imposing car, possessing styling affinity with the Q50 that will help Nissan's premium arm promote its growing range here.

Fashionable LED lights front and back, plus lots of chrome enhance upmarket impact, and the revamp has brought a Mercedes-Benz-sourced eco-friendly 2.2-litre diesel that should appeal to the tax-conscious company car user chooser through 57.6mpg (combined cycle) and low CO2 emissions (129g/km with zero road tax in year one and £110 thereafter).

In the real world I managed close to 50mpg on a long motorway run mixed with town centre jams, overall fuel consumption being aided by regenerative braking - ie every time you hit the brake, some energy is recovered to boost the battery, saving the alternator from drawing on the engine and adding to fuel consumption.

The other powertrain option is a hybrid, but it's hardly a viable alternative, with prices from £42,500 and inferior eco figures to the diesel - 45.6mpg and 145g/km respectively – though the petrol-electric combo does allow 0-62mph in 5.3 seconds, against the diesel's 8.9.

However, if you plan to use the Q70's muscle – in either engine format – check out the more tautly-sprung Sport spec rather than Premium, as tested here.

For Premium read 'armchair': the chassis is set up more for Infiniti's adopted homeland market of the USA. It's comfortable and cosseting but galleons, sail plans and wind direction came to mind, even when negotiating a roundabout at relatively low speeds.

However, I could not fault the car's refinement; wind noise is almost absent on the motorway – unusual even in the premium sector.

Cabin fittings and comforts are lavish and this is where the Q70 - and the Infiniti brand - score highly, with oodles of extras within a competitive price.

The high quality Bose sound system, for instance, is an impressive inclusion – though the lack of a digital (DAB) radio is a glaring omission – and there are other nice touches like the heated steering wheel and front seats, and 360-degree cameras plus parking sensors.

The cabin has plenty of head and legroom, though the high transmission tunnel makes the middle rear seat unsuitable for adults on a long journey.

One way or another, we'll be seeing more Infinitis – especially now there's a new Kent dealership at Maidstone.

Infiniti Q70 2.2D Auto Premium Tech

Price:	from £36,750
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	BMW 5 Series

USED CARS

A buyer's guide

A good time to buy used

SECONDHAND car buyers had a tough recession. Already forced by budget and circumstance to buy used, their problem was compounded by high prices and lack of choice.

Fact is, when fewer new cars are sold – as they were after the financial tsunami of late 2008/early 2009 – that means less stock to feed into the used market after a typical vehicle's initial three years' ownership.

The shortage of used cars for sale was then exacerbated by the previous Government's ill-conceived scrappage scheme (March 2009 to March 2010), when owners of cars more than 10 years old were offered £2,000 by the Treasury and manufacturers to scrap their car and buy a new one.

Some 400,000 cars - often better than many of the old bangers that stayed on the road - were lost in this way.

However, new car sales have recovered well lately due to greater consumer confidence and tempting promotional deals, which means many good late-registered used cars have been filtering back into the market.

The other good news on the used car front is that better reliability, regulation and care is available to buyers in this market.

DRIVING FUN FOR LESS: With used cars like the Alfa Romeo Giulietta, Vauxhall Astra GTC and Skoda Octavia

During the recession, franchised dealers had to rely on and improve used car operations, with many branded schemes upgraded to mirror the service given to new car customers.

This in turn encouraged customer satisfaction polls, making brands and dealers keener to move up the rankings.

So now is not a bad time to buy used, especially as dealers are clogged with part-exchange stock from last month's new registration plate change.

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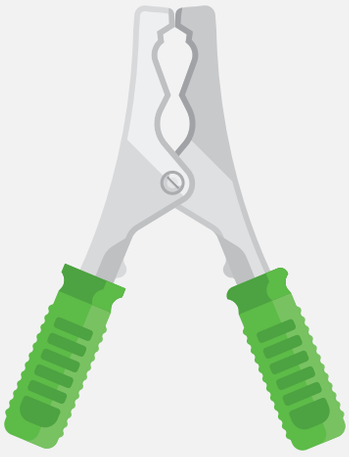

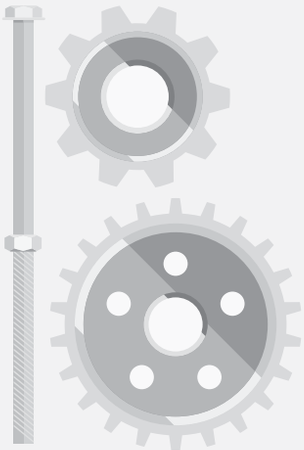

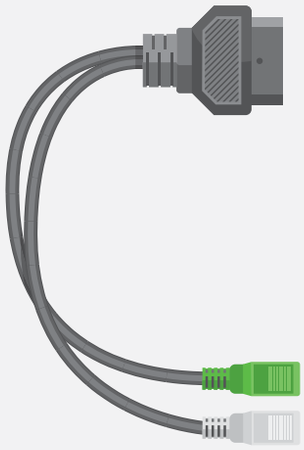

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14/14	**Vauxhall Corsa, 1.2 Design, 3 Dr,** Yellow, 16,667 miles	£7,695
11/11	**Vauxhall Corsa, 1.6 VXR Blue, 3 Dr,** Blue, 44,737 miles	£9,495
12/12	**Vauxhall Corsa, 1.4 SE Auto, 5 Dr,** Grey, 30,832 miles	£7,995
14/14	**Vauxhall Astra, 1.7 CDTi 130 SRi GTC, 3 Dr,** Red, 3,047 miles	£15,995
12/12	**Vauxhall Astra, 1.4 SRi, 5 Dr,** Red, 15,130 miles	£9,395
14/14	**Vauxhall Zafira, 2.0 CDTi Elite Nav, 5 Dr,** Silver, 15,585 miles	£16,495
14/14	**Vauxhall Zafira, 1.8 Techline, 5 Dr,** White, 7,604 miles	£13,995
14/14	**Vauxhall Zafira, 2.0 SRi 165 Ps Tourer, 5 Dr,** Grey, 14,184 miles	£14,595
14/14	**Vauxhall Insignia, 2.0 SRi Nav S/s 163ps, 5 Dr,** Green, 18,988 miles	£14,995
14/14	**Vauxhall Insignia, 2.0 CDTi Elite 163 Ps, 5 Dr, Fc,** Silver, 10,435 miles	£16,595
13/63	**Vauxhall Meriva, 1.3 CDTi Tech Line, 5 Dr,** Blue, 10,800 miles	£10,995
12/12	**Vauxhall Meriva, 1.4 Exclusiv Ltd, 5 Dr,** White, 22,510 miles	£8,295
14/14	**Vauxhall Mokka, 1.6 SE, 5 Dr,** Red, 10,159 miles	£14,995
12/62	**Vauxhall Mokka, 1.7 CDTi Exclusiv, 5 Dr,** Black, 36,615 miles	£12,995
14/14	**Vauxhall Mokka, 1.7 CDTi Exclusiv, 5 Dr,** Black, 10,507 miles	£14,995
12/61	**Citroën DS3 Dstyle Plus 1.6 TD, 3 Dr,** Yellow, 8,632 miles	£9,995
14/14	**Toyota Auris 1.6 Icon, 5 Dr,** Silver, 3,546 miles	£11,995
12/61	**Chevrolet Cruze 1.8 LTZ Auto, 5 Dr,** Red, 8,617 miles	£7,695
12/12	**Vauxhall Corsa, 1.2 Active, 5 Dr,** White, 28,503 miles	£6,795
13/62	**Toyota, LQ 1.0, 3 Dr,** Black, 5,534 miles	£6,695
10/10	**Nissan Micra 1.2 Ntec, 5 Dr,** Red, 42,940 miles	£4,995
07/07	**Vauxhall Corsa, 1.4 Club A/c, 5 Dr,** Blue, 58,051 miles	£3,995
10/60	**Citroën C1 Splash 1.0, 5 Dr,** Blue, 37,367 miles	£4,695
12/62	**Chevrolet Spark 1.0 +, 5 Dr,** Silver, 4,358 miles	£5,495

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PERRYS *Even better*

Looking at alternatives with that bit more space

SPACE FOR MORE: The Skoda Yeti, the Kia Ceed SW (inset top left), the Vauxhall Zafira and the MPV Renault Captur (inset bottom right)

SMALL is beautiful and affordable in the current new car market, but what if you need more space for your family or an active lifestyle?

That's where the used market can help: for the same financial commitment as buying a new supermini you could get behind the wheel of something roomier and really quite interesting, such as a smart estate car, well specc'd up MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) or a chunky SUV (sports utility vehicle).

All three have been market stars in recent years and more are coming onto the second-hand market now.

The SUV was largely inspired by rough, tough 4x4 styling, but when drivers realised they simply weren't using the full off-road capacity, the complexity was reduced and the SUV or 'soft-roader' was born, often available in frugal front-wheel-drive-only form too.

The MPV's one-box style and height evolved from the need to carry the maximum number of people and their luggage; a sort of posh minibus for which the term 'people carrier' was quickly coined.

The usual five or seven seats are also installed with flexibility in mind so they can be folded in any combination or even left flat, turning the MPV into a useful van.

Not happy to leave it there, manufacturers then realised they could marry both types and add family hatchback driveability, to create the crossover.

But not everyone is convinced by these newbies, so there has also been a revival of the estate car, not that it's often referred to so humbly – sports tourer, ST and other variations are more likely.

This is because modern estates are asked to say more about your active living.

Indeed, many are described as 'lifestyle estates', where looks are often given priority over load-carrying prowess.

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The successful applicants will be responsible for assisting teachers in the school, no previous experience is required, full training will be provided:

£12,075 - £12,420 pa - 37½ hours per week, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

***For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.**

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LONDON RESORT COMPANY HOLDINGS LTD

SECTION 48, PLANNING ACT 2008

REGULATION 4, INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (APPLICATIONS: PRESCRIBED FORMS AND PROCEDURE) REGULATIONS 2009

LONDON PARAMOUNT ENTERTAINMENT RESORT DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

NOTICE PUBLICISING A PROPOSED APPLICATION FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER ("DCO")

Notice is hereby given that London Resort Company Holdings Ltd ("LRCH") of 17 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4HP intends to apply to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 for the above mentioned DCO ("the proposed application").

The proposed application for the London Paramount Entertainment Resort project ("the Resort") which will be located on the Swanscombe Peninsula in the County of Kent, in the District of Dartford and the District of Gravesham, will be a nationally significant visitor attraction and leisure resort comprising a leisure core up to 50 ha in area, themed around the films and television programmes of Paramount Pictures, and currently including (but not limited to) the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Aardman Animations.

The Resort core will include—

- events spaces, rides, attractions, day-time and night-time shows and parades, entertainment venues, cinemas, theatres and nightclubs;
- ancillary food and beverage, retail, back of house/service and guest service facilities;
- hotel rooms as a part of a total provision of up to 5,000 hotel bedrooms across the Resort development as a whole;
- associated car parking as part of a maximum provision of 14,000 spaces; and
- hard and soft landscaping including amenity water features such as ponds and canals.

The proposed Resort development also includes the following principal elements—

- the creation of a visitor entrance square;
- the creation of a range of hotels, a water park and a transport interchange at the visitor entrance square;
- the construction of a new dual carriageway access road approximately 2.8 kilometres in length, between the A2(T)/B259 junction, and the Resort development area;
- the provision of a transport interchange at Ebbsfleet International Station, pedestrian facilities from London Road to the River Thames; pedestrian facilities and cycle track route along the Thames Path route; enhancements to the existing jetty on the River Thames to facilitate access by boat for the delivery of construction materials, and the creation of a floating pontoon for embarkment and disembarkment of visitors;
- the creation of a conference and exhibition event space;
- the creation of a creative business hub and office space for the creative industries;
- the creation of a green zone to include areas of environmental enhancement and wildlife habitat creation beside the River Thames;
- the provision of waste management, power generation and power distribution facilities;
- the enhancement of flood defence works; and
- the provision of ancillary emergency and security features.

The proposed Resort is "EIA development" for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009. This means that the proposed works constitute development for which an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required. LRCH's proposed application for a DCO will, therefore, be accompanied by an Environmental Statement, containing the information about the environmental effects of the proposed development.

The documents, plans and maps showing the nature and location of the proposed application, including information so far compiled about environmental impacts (preliminary environmental information), may be inspected free of charge from **Monday 27 April 2015 to Friday 5 June 2015** at the locations and times set out below:

Venue	Opening hours
DARTFORD	
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Project information may continue to be updated until Friday 8 May 2015 and you are therefore advised to check the website www.londonparamount.info and deposit locations for such updates.

Copies of the documents, plans and maps will be available on LRCH's website at **www.londonparamount.info** from **Monday 27 April 2015**. They can also be provided on request by emailing **consultation@londonparamount.info**, by calling the **Freephone number 0800 008 6765** Mondays to Fridays between 9am and 5.30pm or by writing to **FREEPOST Ref: RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, London Paramount, c/o PPS Group, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE**. A reasonable copying charge will apply (up to a maximum of £300 for the full suite of documents). The documents can also be obtained on a DVD, free of charge, by contacting LRCH as detailed here.

LRCH is consulting on the proposed application. Any representations on the proposals should be made in writing to "**FREEPOST Ref: RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, London Paramount, c/o PPS Group, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE**", sent by email to **consultation@londonparamount.info**, or by completing the feedback form which can be found on the LRCH's website at **www.londonparamount.info**. The deadline for receiving responses is **Friday 5 June 2015**. Please quote "London Paramount Entertainment Resort Order" in any correspondence.

LRCH requests that responses state the grounds of representation, indicate who is making it, and provide an address to which any correspondence relating to the representation may be sent.

We may be required to make copies of representations available to the Secretary of State. We will, however, request that personal details are not placed on the public record. Personal details will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be used solely in connection with the consultation process and the development of the Project and, except as noted above, will not be disclosed to any third parties.

Bircham Dyson Bell LLP
Solicitors and Parliamentary Agents acting for LRCH
50 Broadway, London SW1H 0BL

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LONDON RESORT COMPANY HOLDINGS LTD

SECTION 47, PLANNING ACT 2008

LONDON PARAMOUNT ENTERTAINMENT RESORT DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Notice is hereby given that London Resort Company Holdings Ltd ("LRCH") of 17 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4HP has now published the Statement of Community Consultation ("the SOCC") for the London Paramount Entertainment Resort project ("the Resort").

The Resort, which will be located on the Swanscombe Peninsula in the County of Kent, in the District of Dartford and the District of Gravesham, will be a nationally significant visitor attraction and leisure resort comprising a leisure core up to 50 ha in area, themed around the films and television programmes of Paramount Pictures, and currently including (but not limited to) the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Aardman Animations.

The Resort core will include—

- events spaces, rides, attractions, day-time and night-time shows and parades, entertainment venues, cinemas, theatres and nightclubs;
- ancillary food and beverage, retail, back of house/service and guest service facilities;
- hotel rooms as a part of a total provision of up to 5,000 hotel bedrooms across the Resort development as a whole;
- associated car parking as part of a maximum provision of 14,000 spaces; and
- hard and soft landscaping including amenity water features such as ponds and canals.

The proposed Resort development also includes the following principal elements—

- the creation of a visitor entrance square;
- the creation of a range of hotels, a water park and a transport interchange at the visitor entrance square;
- the construction of a new dual carriageway access road approximately 2.8 kilometres in length, between the A2(T)/B259 junction, and the Resort development area;
- the provision of a transport interchange at Ebbsfleet International Station, pedestrian facilities from London Road to the River Thames; pedestrian facilities and cycle track route along the Thames Path route; enhancements to the existing jetty on the River Thames to facilitate access by boat for the delivery of construction materials, and the creation of a floating pontoon for embarkment and disembarkment of visitors;
- the creation of a conference and exhibition event space;
- the creation of a creative business hub and office space for the creative industries;
- the creation of a green zone to include areas of environmental enhancement and wildlife habitat creation beside the River Thames;
- the provision of waste management, power generation and power distribution facilities;
- the enhancement of flood defence works; and
- the provision of ancillary emergency and security features.

The SOCC explains how LRCH will be consulting local people about the proposed application in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008.

The consultation will take place from **Monday 27 April 2015 to Friday 5 June 2015**. Details about the consultation and how to get involved are set out in the SOCC.

From **Monday 13 April 2015 to Friday 5 June 2015** you can view the SOCC on our project website **www.londonparamount.info** and hard copies of the SOCC will also be available for inspection at the following locations:

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Contact us:

Email: consultation@londonparamount.info

Website: www.londonparamount.info

Freephone: 0800 008 6765 (Monday–Friday: 9am–5.30pm)

Address: FREEPOST
Ref: RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY
London Paramount
c/o PPS Group
Sky Light City Tower
50 Basinghall Street
London, EC2V 5DE

8 April 2015

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Work set to start on new Fleet stadium

Ebbsfleet will hope feats on the pitch can match new home

APPROVED: The builders will get to work by the end of May according to the club. Left, the current stadium at Stonebridge Road. Pictures: ALEXANDER SEDGLEY

Football

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

EBBSFLEET United has said they are 'delighted' after council bosses gave their new stadium plans the nod at a meeting earlier this week.

It means that the ambitious multi-million pound redevelopment of the old Stonebridge Road ground can now begin, with club bosses saying work could start by the end of May.

The new main Stonebridge Road stand was granted full planning permission at the meeting of Gravesham Borough Council's regulatory committee. The other three sides of the new ground were given outline planning approval.

It was a widely supported decision by the council, with members of the committee voting unanimously to approve it after Fleet fans packed the public chamber. Because of the crowd, the proposals, which were due to be considered fifth on the agenda, were brought forward to the first item to be voted on by members of the committee.

Fleet's vice chairman, Peter Varney said that showed the level of support for the development.

He said: "It's another example of how enthusiastic the supporters are.

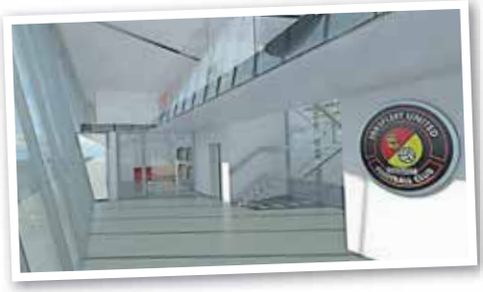
"They've been behind us home and away and off the field too."

The redevelopment will see capacity increased to just over 6,000, with around 2,000 seats at the ground. The main stand will house all commercial and operational facilities, with hopes it will become a major landmark in the area.

Mr Varney said: "This is a major step in the future progression of this football club. I'd like to thank in particular the design team, who have been fantastic, and also note the help and support of the council members in the vote. Also credit to Peter Price and his planning team who have worked tirelessly on the details to enable us to get to this point."

The redevelopment proposal came after the Liam Daish stand was deemed to be at the end of its life by safety officers. Estimates gave the main stand two years before it would need to be replaced.

The club is owned by Kuwaiti businessman Dr Abdulla Al-Humaidi. He is also spearheading the London Paramount project in nearby Swanscombe, and it is understood that the new stadium will help the club manage any new swell of interest when the theme park, and new Ebbsfleet Garden City open.



STADIUM: The finished stadium development will be purpose built for Ebbsfleet's needs

Sport Shorts

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Tonbridge driver takes to track in Monza race

TONBRIDGE-based racing driver Adrian Quaife-Hobbs kicks off his season of racing over the weekend in the opening round of the Blancpain Endurance Series.

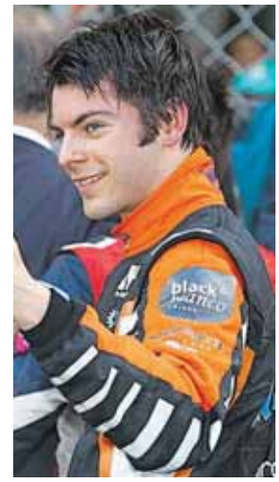
The 24-year-old is hoping he can make his sports car debut at Italy's Monza track a successful one, racing in a VonRyanRacing McLaren 650S GT3.

"I can't wait to get back behind the wheel competitively, naturally we've tested and that's all gone incredibly well, but there's no substitute for racing," said Adrian.

"I know the Monza track and now know the McLaren 650S, the team is very professional, and the series is enjoying its best season since it started, so it should be a great weekend."

The racer says that although he joins the series from single seaters, he's confident he can make the change without problems.

He said: "The most difficult thing will probably be not wanting to hand over the car to my team-mates but I'll leave the team to sort out that."



SPEEDY: Quaife-Hobbs is ready for his race in Italy

FANS: Chairman Jim Parmenter with fans at the Crabble

Dover fan banned from Crabble for life

DOVER Athletic have banned a fan from their Crabble Road home for life, after they abused a visiting player during a recent match.

The spectator made the offensive comments to the player, about the death of their child, during the Whites match at home against Woking on Easter Monday (April 6).

An investigation was launched after the incident was reported to the club by a match day official and a club safety officer.

Dover chairman Jim Parmenter said: "Everyone at Dover is saddened and disgusted that such deplorable behaviour, for which there can be no mitigation, has occurred at our club. Our sincerest regret and apologies go to the player and his family.

"We make great effort to be welcoming, hospitable and inclusive to all and I hope that our supporters will not be judged on this one individual.

"Following the conclusion of our investigation the individual involved will be issued with a life ban with immediate effect."

Kent ready for LV championship

BOOKMAKERS are giving odds of just 9/1 that Kent County Cricket Club tops the LV= County Championship Division Two this season.

The county team's chances could be dashed from the start, as they are due to line up against two favourites to gain promotion to Division One, Essex and Lancashire, in their first two matches of the season.

Despite this, Kent wicketkeeper, Sam Billings has faith in the squad.

The 23-year-old tips two of his homegrown team-mates Daniel Bell-Drummond and Sam Northeast as the ones to watch at the club in 2015.

The season starts next Sunday (April 19) when Kent face Essex.

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